

# Holidays in the City—Parades, Lights, Shopping and More

TEXT BY **MOIRA QUINN** PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF **CHARLOTTE CENTER CITY PARTNERS**

The Panthers are playing, temperatures are dropping and planning has begun in earnest for six weeks of holidays in the Center City. This year, we have exciting additions that are sure to create new traditions for you and your family as our city comes alive with music, lights, trees, shopping, parades and more.

The magic begins with the lighting of South End’s tree on Saturday, November 19. Join us at Atherton Mill for music, hot chocolate...and Santa flips the switch.

Then, on Thanksgiving Day, the Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade steps off at 9:30 a.m. on Tryon Street in Uptown Charlotte. Now in its 70th year, the parade is a proud Carolinas tradition. What began as a local holiday parade has grown into a magical, regional showcase of performances, floats, dignitaries, celebrities, marching bands and balloons. It’s not too late for you and the entire family to be part of the parade as a volunteer, as a participant balloon handler or character walker. There’s a job for everyone, whether you can walk the route or not. Sign up at [paradevolunteer.com](http://paradevolunteer.com).

Charlotte’s celebration of the holidays continues Dec. 1, with the Holiday Tree Lighting on the Square at Trade and Tryon streets. The fun starts at 5:30pm. Mascots from ACC football teams—in town for the

ACC Championship Game and Fan Fest—will help Santa flip the switch to light up Center City just after 6 p.m. The Children’s Theater cast of “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical” will be among the entertainers. Then, the party moves inside Founders Hall for live music and entertainment. While the bands play, Santa will set up shop for pictures with the kids.

Shopping for friends and loved ones is a core part of the holiday tradition and we are ramping up retail in South End and Uptown through Small Business Saturday, the ChristKindlMarkt Christmas Village and a series of popular pop-up shops.

Release yourself from the crush of the mall and discover Small Business Saturday in South End on November 26th. Mark your calendar for the Saturday after Thanksgiving for a truly local and uncommon shopping experience. We provide a free trolley to move you to the unique, locally-owned retail in this hot district.

The ChristKindlMarkt in Romare Bearden Park is comprised of vendors in wooden huts, like those found in a traditional Christmas Village in Germany selling traditional handmade crafts, gifts, Christmas and holiday items and so much more. It will also feature specialty foods and delicious drinks. The village opens after the parade and stays open every day



except Mondays until Christmas.

Our Center City has a growing base of retail in Uptown, South End and West End. During the holidays, we amp up our offerings with special pop-ups to satisfy the heightened demand. Our signature pop-up is the Tinsel Box in the beautiful lobby of Foundation For The Carolinas in the 200 block of N. Tryon Street from November 28-December 3. There, you will find retail offerings including specialty and hand-made gifts to satisfy any taste and price-point. Check out Front Porch Sundays in South End on the porch of Shook Kelley every first Sunday of the month where local vendors showcase one-of-a-kind items.

Thousands of Charlotteans will usher in 2017 in the heart of Center City at Romare Bearden Park as part of CLT New Year’s Eve. On December 31, Uptown will come alive with food trucks, street performers and live musical performances. The festivities will crescendo at midnight with the annual “lighting of the crown” and a spectacular fireworks display. It will be a magical way to welcome the New Year to our city!

Despite the chilly winter air, Uptown Charlotte will feel the warmth of the holiday spirit as our community comes together to give thanks, light up the night and ring in 2017.

