

# Neat holiday shopping experience in NT

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“Here, you will find antiques, gifts, home decor, handmade artisan items and even a vinyl record shop,” according to the website [www.theoldchapelmarket.com](http://www.theoldchapelmarket.com). “We also have our Orange Brick Cafe featuring a selection of hot and cold drinks, desserts and light food menu. We hope to see you soon!”

So what of this Old Chapel? “We opened on Dec. 1, 2017. We’ve grown to about 130 vendors; we have about two floors of space,” Jacob Wankasky said. “The building is an 1800s church, it used to be called Ascension Church, Ascension parish. I was actually an altar boy here. My parents were married here; I was baptized here – so we kind of grew up in this church. “We leased it and turned it into an Antique and Artisan Market.

It’s been going really well; we recently expanded.”

Of the Old Greenhouse, operating since September, he said, “That one focuses more on furniture, home décor. We do fresh flowers. It’s located in a greenhouse that was built in the 1920s. In 1970, it was converted into a flower shop that was called Hoch’s Flower Shop and that was there for almost 50 years. The owners of that retired and they sold the property, so we bought it and converted that into an artisan market of sorts, with an emphasis on home décor furniture and fresh flowers.”

Jacob Wankasky pointed out both businesses are truly community-oriented, with many vendors being of local flavor.

“We put out a call for vendors when we first leased the property, and the response was really overwhelming,” he said. “There was a lot of people who had a personal history with the (church) building that wanted to be a part of this, that happened to be in the field of making and selling items. Word of mouth, obviously. We did have a business prior to this called Five Corners Country Store out in Pendleton.

“So, we worked with a handful of vendors out there already. It was the same type of business.”

The Wankaskys invite readers to visit both locations and check out the truly vast assortment of interesting items. The stores draw locals as well as groups and tourists visiting Buffalo-Niagara.

Consider a few comments found on Yelp:

√ “What a lovely experience coming here was! It’s set in an old church with lots of nooks and crannies. The entire first floor and basement is filled with crafts, antiques, and beautiful decor. Prices were extremely reasonable and the staff was a huge help. Inside you will find a quaint cafe with hot drinks and baked goods available. A one stop shop – definitely recommend coming here!” commented visitor Angela R. of Tonawanda.

√ “I’ve popped in a few times now to explore the remnants of



Visit “Christmas at the Chapel” on Saturday, Dec. 5.

past lives. It’s two and a half stories of history. Some of the standbys never change (like the bear table in the basement, which never ceases to catch my eye), but if you cycle in a few times a year, the inventory will change, and it is a new adventure all over again.

“Left a friend in the records section to sift through the music while I explored all of the toys. There is something for everyone, including kitchenware, molded candles and lunch. I have yet to try the Orange Cat Cafe located inside, but I can testify that it does smell good. Just make sure to take advantage of the upstairs seating so you can get a birds’ eye view on the action!” commented North Tonawanda visitor Christina D.

√ “An antique store done right,” agreed visiting shopper Steven F. of Apopka, Florida. “First, the building and all of the stained glass is beautiful. Second, it’s staffed with helpful people, so much so that they even told us of other neighboring antique stores. Third, there was a variety in the booths. The prices were reasonable. Worth the stop.”

With comments such as these, us holiday shoppers do have to consider a visit. Both stores are open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. And they will be participating in Small Business Saturday next weekend along with some special buying experiences this holiday season.

“Well, we have three events coming up – obviously Small Business Saturday,” Jacob Wankasky said. “But our biggest event of the year is called ‘Christmas at the Chapel.’ That was generally held the third Saturday of December. But this year North Tonawanda cancelled the NT Winter Walk, which was one of their biggest events of the year. So, we moved the ‘Christmas at the Chapel’ up to the first Saturday of the month, which was traditionally our Winter Walk event.”

He said this year’s “Christmas at the Chapel” will take place Saturday, Dec. 5. Along with some great shopping will be a social distancing event with Santa event. Families are invited to bring a camera or smartphone for free photos.

“For the ‘Christmas at the Chapel,’ the first 100 customers will get a free personalized orna-

ment of sorts,” Jacob Wankasky said. “We’ll have the historic pipe organ – it’s played from 11 to 3 – they do Christmas music, so we have a lot of people come out to hear the organ. It’s a connection to their heart. And then we’ll do candlelight from 5 to 6.”

“Santa Claus will be at the first event,” he added. “There will be socially distanced photos with Santa; it will be set up outside. We have a cute idea of how we’re going to socially distance the photos, so that it’s safe for everyone.”

On Saturday, Dec. 19, the Old Chapel presents “Winterfest 2020.”

“That one will feature horse-drawn sleigh rides with Santa and other Christmas activities throughout the day, music and such,” Jacob Wankasky said.

He and Jennifer invite readers to visit this holiday gift season, or at anytime throughout the year.

“It’s a great shopping experience; there is really something for everyone here. If you’re looking for a gift or looking for a memory, you’re going to find it here,” Jacob Wankasky said.

For more information, visit the website listed earlier, or just stop by. You’ll like it.

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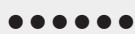


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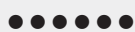
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