



MERI SQUARES NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2025

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays, everyone!

The weather is certainly saying winter is here and the countdown to Christmas and Hanukkah is on. So is the countdown to the end of this session of square dancing. There are lots of festive events over the next two weeks. Make sure to read to the end of the newsletter.

Thursday, December 11 – Christmas Party

I hope everyone has selected their festive attire for Thursday's Christmas Party. This is an opportunity for Plus and SSD dancers, as well as friends who may not be dancing any longer, to come together to enjoy a meal and friendship. Remember, we are celebrating at **Westminster Presbyterian Church, 470 Roosevelt Ave**. Parking can be a challenge so please be prepared to walk a block if necessary.

"Cocktails" will start at 6:00 pm, followed by a potluck dinner at 6:30 and dancing at 7:30 pm. Please feel free to come just for the dinner or just the dancing if you have a full schedule. You are welcome any time. If you are able to bring a dish to share for the dinner, please check the sign up list or contact Joyce at brysonfleury@gmail.com or Susan at susan.vail.ocsb@gmail.com to see what may be needed.

Snowsuit Fund fundraiser (The "Mitten Tree")

Every year at this time, Meri Squares dancers generously donate to the Ottawa Snowsuit Fund. You are encouraged to bring hats, mittens, socks and scarves to keep Ottawa's children warm through the winter. Monetary donations are also always welcome. When you arrive at the dinner on December 11, you can place your donation on our "Mitten Tree" and make it shine through your generosity. All donations are then collected and dropped off at the Snowsuit Fund before Christmas. We thank you in advance for your gifts.

SSD Graduation

We will be recognizing our latest members to complete the SSD program. The ceremony will be part

of the Christmas Party on Thursday, December 11. Certificates will be presented during the dance program. Congratulations!

Ugly sweater week – December 16 and 18

Since Meri Squares will be dancing the week of December 15, we decided it might be fun to encourage everyone to wear their ugly Christmas sweater on the last day of dancing – December 16 or December 18. After all, you can never get too much of an ugly Christmas sweater! I, for one, am looking forward to what you have been hiding in your closets!

Parking at Westminster Church

I have been asked to remind everyone that parking is limited around the church building, especially when snow removal adds piles of snow along the sides. Handicap spaces are reserved for those with official handicap permits. And please remember if you are driving around the back of the building to enter at the south end and be careful on the corners.

Advertising for new dancers – January SSD – Open Houses, Jan 6 and 13.

We are asking all members to consider taking a flyer and posting it in their buildings or community locations. We should also have door hanger flyers available that you can distribute to your neighbours. Of course, our best advertising tool is always word of mouth, so please encourage friends and family to join us. Open houses are at J.A. Dulude Arena, 941 Clyde Ave, Ottawa at 7 pm.

Dancing start in the 2026!

Wow, 2026 already! Meri Squares will return to dancing with SSD open houses on January 6. Plus will start on Thursday, January 8. John will be launching right back into completing the teach of the Plus program so make sure you review during the holidays.

For returning SSD dancers, we have two Open Houses, for which we need our angels, and then the full program starts on January 20. If you have completed the SSD program, we will have full SSD tips every 3rd tip until 9:00 pm and then dance full SSD from 9:00 to 9:30pm. This is a great opportunity to refine those skills you have learned and make sure they are really imbedded in your memory! It is customary for SSD dancers to repeat the full teach program to solidify their skills.

The fee for all returning dancers, SSD and Plus, is \$135 payable on the first day of dancing. **Thank you to John and Wendy**

I would just like to close with a huge thank you to John Charman and Wendy VanderMeulen, our amazing callers. Meri Squares is very fortunate to have such great individuals to guide us on our dancing journey.

This has been a wonderful dance session. We have welcomed new friends and grown existing friendships as dancers learn new skills. As always, if you think we can make Meri Squares better, share your ideas.

Wishing everyone a fantastic holiday season and a safe and happy New Year!

Lamar Mason
President