

## Community gathers for tree lighting ceremony in Whitney



By Mike Riley

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South Algonquin Township had a tree lighting ceremony on Dec. 2 to ring in the Christmas season in Whitney. Organized by Councillor Joan Kuiack, Councillor Laurie Siydock, and the beautification committee, the event brought many folks out to the Lester Smith Community Centre, despite the snowy weather and slick roads. Kuiack comments on this successful event. Kuiack said that she and Siydock had been busy, along with the beautification committee decorating Whitney, including the gazebo, the bridge and the community centre for that evening's tree lighting ceremony. "We chose not to light up anything here and have the tree lighting tonight. So it'll be the official kick off. It was done years ago but this is the first time it's been done in a long time," she says. Attendees came by the community centre by 5:30 p.m. to witness the tree lighting and to donate an ornament and place it on the tree. Donations were also gratefully accepted for baked goods for that night's festivities and for the food bank. Coffee, tea and hot chocolate were on hand for those wishing to warm their hands from the winter elements. In addition, Bart Lynch and Amy Lynch provided live Christmas carols for the attendees, which got everyone singing along. Mayor Ethel LaValley thanked Siydock, Kuiack and the beautification committee for all their hard work. "It's indeed a pleasure to get back to the tree lighting. It hasn't happened for a bit. Have a Merry Christmas and a happy 2024!" she says. Kuiack told Bancroft This Week that despite the weather, they had a good turnout. "As mentioned previously, this event had been something that was done previously and the beautification committee felt it was time to restart. What a lovely way to kick off the Christmas season and bring the community together," she says. "Eric

Defrene kindly donated the tree, McRae Lumber assisted with hanging the lights, Laurie Siydock, Theresa Kramer, Joanne Healy, Diane Kay and myself organized the rest.?