



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

Greetings, Wisconsin educators, staff, and students!

I hope this letter finds you well and that you are having a great fall. I am writing to you today because we are getting ready to decorate for the holiday season here at the Wisconsin State Capitol, and we can't do it without your help!

Each year, we fill the Capitol's holiday tree with handmade ornaments from kids, students, and families from every corner of Wisconsin, transforming the Capitol Rotunda into the centerpiece of our holiday celebrations. Well, it's about that time of year, and we are once again counting on your creativity and imagination to help bring the holiday spirit to life!

I declared 2026 the Year of the Neighbor because I wanted to spend this year celebrating the neighbors who make Wisconsin the great place it is to call home. Over my nearly eight years as governor, I've had the immense privilege to travel across the state and meet Wisconsin's neighbors in their homes, communities, schools, businesses, and more—and let me tell you, each Wisconsinite I meet makes me more and more proud to be governor of this wonderful state. So, I am excited to announce that the theme of the 2026 Wisconsin State Capitol Holiday Tree is "The Year of the Neighbor" to honor all the neighbors across our state, like all of you, who make Wisconsin the extraordinary place it is.

Helping our neighbors and being a good neighbor is a part of who we are as Wisconsinites—it's in our DNA, and our state is filled with amazing people who work every day to make life just a little bit better for everyone who lives here. From the first responders who answer our call when we need them most, like our firefighters, EMS professionals, and law enforcement, to the veteran who served our country, the farmer who feeds our family, the postal worker who delivers our mail, or the nurses and doctors who help make you better when you are sick or hurt. Or it could be the friendly faces you see at school, like the librarian who helps you find a new favorite book, the teachers who comfort, inspire, and educate you, the coach who guides you to be a better player in your favorite sport, or the parent volunteer who helps make school events magical. It could even be the folks in your neighborhood at home, the family you know who brought casserole over during a difficult time, or an elderly neighbor who lives down the block and helps keep tabs on the neighborhood to keep it safe. I encourage students to think about what being a good neighbor means to them, as well as all the good neighbors they know and love who make Wisconsin a great state to live.

There are so many ways that each of you can apply your creativity to make an ornament that shows the true value of being a good neighbor and a good Wisconsinite. I can't wait to see what you come up with!

We ask that students make ornaments from non-breakable material. They must be strong enough to hold up during shipping and to be handled while the tree is being decorated. For these reasons, we recommend that students do not use fragile items or paper cutouts that may tear easily. We suggest ornaments that are 4-6 inches in size and made from a color that contrasts with the color of the tree so they can easily be seen and enjoyed by all visitors. Please attach a ten-inch loop of ribbon or string from which each ornament will hang.

We hope your school will share your classroom's experience making the ornaments with pictures and stories through Facebook, Instagram, Bluesky, and X using #WICapitolTree.

Please send your ornaments to the address below by November 20. Also, please include the teacher's name and grade, school name, and address so that we may acknowledge your contribution.

Emily Gorman
Wisconsin Department of Administration
Division of Facilities and Transportation Services
17 West Main Street, Suite 119
Madison, WI 53703

If you have any questions about an ornament, please contact the Facilities Management Information Center at (608) 266-1485. Please note that ornaments will not be returned.

Students are also invited to attend the Capitol Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony on **Tuesday, December 1, 2026, at noon at the Wisconsin State Capitol** to see their ornaments on display. The Capitol Holiday Tree will be on display through the end of the year, and students and their families are encouraged to visit the Capitol to share in the holiday spirit. Capitol hours and information are available on the Wisconsin State Legislature website: <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/about/visit>.

We will gratefully accept any ornaments your school provides for the Capitol Holiday Tree. If there are extras, they will be shared with nursing homes, assisted living facilities, hospitals, and veterans homes to share the holiday cheer with others.

Thank you for helping to make the Wisconsin State Capitol beautiful and festive this holiday season.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Evers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tony Evers
Governor