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Fellowship Baptist Youth Pastor Tyler Prater, far right, directs the church's choir Wednesday night at a rehearsal for the upcoming musical, "A Thrill of Hope," which will take place at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 15, at the church at 310 W. Pancake in Liberal. L&T photo/Robert Pierce

By ROBERT PIERCE

• Leader & Times

Many schools and churches throughout the Liberal community will have concerts and programs in the coming weeks to help celebrate the Christmas season.

Among the churches is Liberal's Fellowship Baptist, which will put on its annual program, but youth pastor Tyler Prater said after a full-out holiday show last year and others throughout 2013, this year's musical will be a little smaller.

“We’ve put together a musical that’ll be about 35 minutes long,” he said.

The program, which will be featured during the church’s Sunday morning service on Dec. 15, has five songs arranged by two well-known choral arrangers – David Clydesdale and Kent Copeland.

Prater said narrations were written by Fellowship personnel to help tie together and introduce every song in the musical.

“Within the narrations is a story that goes along with the song and presents the Gospel message,” he said. “There’s one thread that seems to be tied in through every song and through every narration, and that’s hope.”

For this reason, the program is entitled “A Thrill of Hope,” which features a line from the song on which it is based.

“The musical opens with a portion of the classic Christmas song, ‘O Holy Night,’ which contains that line ‘A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn,’” Prater said.

He said through music and narration, the hope that was ignited with the birth of Jesus Christ more than 2,000 years ago can once again be aroused in today’s world.

The narration of “A Thrill of Hope,” presented by Fellowship’s Andrew Lender and Tiffany Prater, was written by FBC’s Erin Rush.

Work on the Christmas program began almost immediately after the church finished its annual Fourth of July show, “Liberty.”

“In August, we started putting some thoughts together for it,” Tyler said. “In September, we started putting all the music together. Stage two is putting the narration together. Now, we’re into phase three with throwing the lighting and all that stuff together.”

He added the Christmas musical was made shorter because Fellowship’s music and drama department was stretched thin in 2013.

“We came off our big Christmas production last year at the end of 2012, and we got right to work on the Easter musical,” he said. “Just following the Easter musical, we got to work on our Liberty production, which is our Fourth of July production. The leaders of the church have sensed that we wanted to give our music and drama folks a break since Liberty and Easter and Christmas last year took so much out of us. We just condensed it down a little bit to a 35-minute musical instead of a full dramatic musical, which is generally an hour long.”

Tyler said the church hopes to bring back a bigger production for the 2014 Christmas season.

“Next year, we look to put together something bigger again, but with Liberty, it just prevents us from being able to do so many big things every year because it takes so much time and resources,” he said.

Prater praised the efforts of all involved with the production of “A Thrill of Hope,” and he said practices thus far have been going well.

“We’re thankful that we have a group of really dedicated talented people that pick up music very fast and work hard at it,” he said. “That enables us to not have to practice as much as far as music goes and two talented narrators that pick it up very fast. The dress rehearsal’s next Wednesday, and it’s been smooth.”

“A Thrill of Hope” will be presented starting at 10:30 a.m. Dec. 15 at Fellowship Baptist at 310 W. Pancake in Liberal.

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