

Lifestyles

Section

C

Annie's Mailbox
Horoscopes
SocietyPage 3C
Page 3C
Page 2C

Sunday, March 21, 2010

Dobson church to host
Easter productionMONDEE TILLEY
STAFF REPORTER

DOBSON —More than 60 members of Salem Baptist Church are rehearsing for their first Easter musical production, which begins next weekend.

The idea for the production came two years ago, when late member Tim VanHoy came to Pastor Dr. Bobby Lewis Jr. with a desire to do a musical drama for Easter. VanHoy was the executive director of Habitat for Humanity before dying of a heart attack last August.

"He came back to me with this particular musical, but we didn't have quite enough time to do it last year, because we knew it would take quite a few months to put together. We began to plan it with Tim to do it this year and then of course, last summer he went home to be with the Lord," Lewis said.

So the church decided to go forward and see VanHoy's dream to fruition in his memory as an outreach to the church and to the community.

"More than just a Man" is a musical drama that takes a look at the life of Christ.

"We are involving the our main choir, the children's choir and some church members in the drama. We will have about 60 individuals involved in the production," he said.

Lewis said the church has spent months preparing for the special service.

"We really don't want it to be a play, we really want it to be a worship service — that's our goal. We are not trying to put on a show. It wasn't Tim's desire and it's certainly not my desire as pastor. We are not looking to put on some sort of Broadway type show. We are looking at having a dramatic, musical worship service that may speak to people's heart differently than a typical sermon," Lewis said.

The play will be performed at 7 p.m. on both March 26 and 28. The play will not be held on March 27, because there is an Easter egg hunt planned for that day.

Everyone is invited. There's no cost.

"I use a lot of visuals here anyway, but we know that some people need to see it. More than just hearing it, they need to see it. That's a lot of why we found Easter music to be a very effective way to reach people of all ages," Lewis said.

The church leader said the production is a great way for church members to get involved with the services.

"It's a good way to get all of our folks involved at different levels. Everyone will be in costume. All the dialog and all of the music will be done from memory, so it's a good challenge for us as a church to step out and do something a little different," Lewis said.

MONDEE TILLEY/THE NEWS

(Above) An Easter musical production will be offered at Salem Baptist Church this Friday and Sunday at 7 p.m. The church is at 430 Rockford Road in Dobson. (At right) Nicodemus, played by John Kennedy, kneels before Jesus, played by Mitch Stanley, during a rehearsal of "More than just a Man" at Salem Baptist Church.



MONDEE TILLEY/THE NEWS

Joseph of Arimathea, played by Pastor Bobby Lewis, laughs with Caiaphas, played by Dan Hornak, during a rehearsal of "More than just a Man" at Salem Baptist Church recently.

See CHURCH, page 3C



MONDEE TILLEY/THE NEWS

More than 60 members of Salem Baptist Church are participating in an Easter musical at the church that was the idea of the late Tim VanHoy.

CHURCH:

Continued from page 1C

He said that the church has put on Christmas cantatas in the past, but nothing to this scale before.

The church has about 650 members and has between 400 to 500 attendees. Attendance has doubled in the last several years, Lewis said.

Over the past couple of years, all of the old facilities were torn down and a new worship center was built. The church is 112 years old, but all of the buildings have been built in the last decade. Lewis said there is an upcoming business meeting to discuss further building plans because they have already run out of space. The sanctuary was completed in 2005.

"The only answer to growth and what we've seen God do is that He has been blessing us. We have had a tremendous amount of new members from other Christian backgrounds and particularly from people who have been non-believers that have come to faith in Christ."

Lewis said the church has gone from less than \$200,000 in receipts to about \$800,000 this year. He said missions has gone up well more than 1,000 percent in giving.

"When I first came here, I lead the Christmas musical and there were about 15 people in it. It was just a real simple singing with hymn books. God has done it, He has brought us through to these new adventures and challenges. I'm really pleased with all of our people," Lewis said.

One of the main characters in the production is Dan Hornak, who is playing Caiaphas. Hornak has acted in many other productions in the community. Lewis is playing Joseph of Arimathea and Jesus is being played by Mitch Stanley.

"God has brought us men like Dan who has an acting background," Lewis said.

Hornak has taken a professional directing program he believes benefit-

ed the production greatly.

"It's about faith. Putting on a dramatic musical is a leap of faith. It's full of challenges and that makes you operate outside your comfort zone. No one schedule ever matches up and life happens and that's where faith comes in, too. This dramatic musical 'More than just a Man' is more than just a play for me. Luckily, they have an excellent music director, Beth Hembree. The choir has practiced some of the songs for more than a year. I'm amazed at how dedicated everyone is. Our youngest is 8 and our oldest is 80. I think everybody believes in what they are doing. What we are trying to do is make it come alive — bring that time back, and make it as realistic as possible," Hornak said.

Lewis said God has brought him many talented church members who add to the quality of the musical.

"God has blessed us with a lot more singers and musicians. We have several praise bands now. The youth has grown by leaps and bounds. That's actually why we are looking at building. We are out of space for our young people," Lewis said.

"These are good problems to have. In an age when a lot of churches are struggling, and they are, just like secular businesses, churches are affected by the economy, too. Somehow we have been able to rise above that. For example, we have built this building and paid over \$1 million on it in the last four years. We've also purchased a \$60,000 bus with cash last week and we are talking about adding on. These are just God's blessing. It's certainly not me as pastor or our pastoral guides, it's just God working through the church. There are a lot of good, hard working people here."

"More than just a Man" is a dramatic musical that is seen through the eyes of religious leaders that opposed Jesus Christ.

"Through the play we see the transformation of two of those men. We watch a pretty dramatic transformation of

two of those religious leaders that become followers of Christ. They recognize that Christ is more than just a man."

Lewis said he's been preaching the gospel of Luke off and on for the past three and a half years as a series.

"One of the things that we have been learning is that Jesus' primary opposition actually came from religious people. And unfortunately it's still true today. The ones who tend to give Christ a bad name are not the people of the world, they are religious people. They fight each other. When churches split over silly little things, that's what we discover. It's very true to life. The ones who should know better are the ones who oppose the Lord."

Lewis said he hopes the special services will help change lives.

"What we find through production is that two of these men turn and trust Christ. And at the end, we will give people the same opportunity. That's why we do it — we want to change lives. We don't want to see Salem lifted up. We do not want to see Salem receive any glory, or praise or credit. We want to acknowledge that God has done it and we are grateful that he has allowed us to be a part of that."

The play starts in the temple when Jesus is 12-years-old and goes through his death and resurrection.

This is Lewis' seventh year as pastor of the church.

Time Warner Cable customers can see a broadcast of the church's Sunday service at 2 p.m. on Sundays. A few months ago, the church aired its 100th broadcast. Lewis said the church has received a lot of praise for that ministry especially from shut-ins and those who aren't able to attend services regularly. The church's services are also available on the Internet.

For more information, check out www.salembaptistdobson.org. The church is at 430 Rockford Road, Dobson.

Contact Mondee Tilley at mtilley@mtairynews.com or at 719-1930.