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CAMPUS NEWS

Community Invited to Attend Gardner-Webb's Annual Festival of Lights Celebration

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON NOVEMBER 17, 2021



Event Returns to Campus with Live Performances, Luminarias and Lighting of the Tree

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The community is invited to begin the celebration of the Christmas season at Gardner-Webb University's Festival of Lights, which returns to a live event this year. A beloved Christmas tradition since 1984, the performances and festivities will be held on Dec. 2 at 7 p.m. in Dover Theatre. The program will include all the favorite activities that area families have enjoyed in the past—reading of the Christmas story, singing carols, and lighting luminarias and the Christmas tree.

"I'm most looking forward to coming together to officially usher in the Christmas season on our campus," observed Tracy Jessup, vice president of Christian Life and Service and senior minister to the University. "This event is the University's gift to the community, and it is always such a meaningful celebration for everyone who attends."



▲ Last year's Festival of Lights was a virtual program featuring Gardner-Webb students.

Dr. Josh Cheney, assistant professor of music, who coordinated the music for last year's virtual celebration, is also looking forward to experiencing the event with an audience. "Personally, I am most looking forward to my first in-person Festival of Lights," he noted. "For musicians, Advent is a season where we have an incredible opportunity to share our gifts with our community. Here at Gardner-Webb, Festival of Lights is a wonderful tradition that we are honored to uphold. I hope that our work to prepare this event will enliven every person who comes in the door that night."

Gardner-Webb's President Dr. William Downs will read the account of Jesus' birth from the Bible, and music will be presented by several groups, including:

- Brass Choir.
- Concert Choir.
- Figaro Ensemble.
- Handbell Ensemble.
- Men's Chorale.
- Old Time Ensemble.
- Treble Chorale.

The music will be a mix of hymns for choir and audience, carol arrangements, original compositions by students and faculty, and a few fun secular pieces.

After the program, attendees will walk from Dover Theatre on a luminaria-lighted path to the front of Tucker Student Center for the lighting of the campus Christmas tree. Cheney said the traditions and the symbols point to the real reason for the celebration. "To me, the Festival of Lights is an opportunity to share the joy of this special season and to acknowledge the true Light, Jesus Christ, sent from God to be the Savior of the world," Cheney asserted. "Advent is a season of anticipation. Come share with us the excitement of anticipating the birth of the Son of God!"

Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request 10 days prior to the event. Please call (704) 406-2155 or email servicerequests@gardner-webb.edu with your request.

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina's recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.