

CAMPUS NEWS

Gardner-Webb's Annual Festival of Lights Begins Celebration of Christmas

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON NOVEMBER 16, 2022



Community Invited to Join the Campus on Dec. 1 to Experience the Sights and Sounds of the Season

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University's Festival of Lights, a cherished Christmas tradition since 1984, will be the final event celebrated on Founders Day (<https://gardner-webb.edu/news/founders-day-on-dec-1-celebrates-leaders/>), Dec. 1. Held at 7 p.m. in Dover Theatre, the annual program to begin the Christmas season features musical performances and the lighting of the campus tree.

The evening offers all the favorite activities that area families have enjoyed in the past—reading of the Christmas story, singing carols, and luminaria-lighted walkways. Gardner-Webb music groups and featured soloists will perform, as well as lead the audience in “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear,” and “The First Nowell.”



Chair and Associate Professor of Music Dr. Aaron Rice is new to campus this year and delighted to present this year's program. "We are excited to kick off the Christmas season together at the annual Festival of Lights celebration," he shared. "The Department of Music looks forward to this event every year where our Cleveland County and Gardner-Webb communities come together to experience the glorious sounds of the season. This year's celebration will include familiar carols accompanied by organ and brass as well as an organ feature played by GWU alumnus, Timothy Scruggs, and members of the Marching Bulldogs."

Rice continued, "The organ feature, 'I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In' by Richard Elliott is a fusion of musical styles, combining solo organ material with a drumline. The composer Richard Elliott is the principal organist for the [Mo Tabernacle Choir \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJWUVCpGQrc\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJWUVCpGQrc), and the piece has garnered acclaim across the country after its premier in 2018."

President Dr. William Downs will welcome the audience and give the opening prayer. Gardner-Webb choral and instrumental groups, brass and percussion will perform. Interim Vice President of Christian Life and Service Neal Payne will present the Old and New Testament readings and offer the closing prayer. After the program in Dover Theatre, guests will walk along a luminaria-lined path to the lighting of the campus tree in front of Tucker Student Center. Then, refreshments will be served in Tucker.

Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request 10 working days prior to the event. Please call 704-406-4270 or email disabilityservices@gardner-webb.edu with your request.

The Festival of Lights will also be live streamed on Gardner-Webb's [Facebook \(https://www.facebook.com/events/464927152391839/\)](https://www.facebook.com/events/464927152391839/) and [website \(https://gardner-webb.edu/academics/colleges-schools/arts-and-sciences/festival-of-lights/\)](https://gardner-webb.edu/academics/colleges-schools/arts-and-sciences/festival-of-lights/).

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina's recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to nine colleges and schools, 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.