

Puppet show kicks off Christmas holiday season

Children and parents alike are invited to kick off the holiday season by attending a special “Christmas for Kids” program from 10-11:30 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 1, at the Trinity School Activity Center, 800 Augustine St., Kaukauna.

A professional troupe of puppeteers, Hands 2 Grow Puppet Productions LLC, will present a puppet show entitled “Sing a Song of Christmas.” The presentation will not only explore

some of the Christmas carols enjoyed and sung throughout the month of December but also connect these familiar tunes with the beautiful story of Jesus’ birth.



“We are so excited to be returning to Trinity to present (this show),” said Cassie Payne, Hands 2 Grow Puppet Productions director. “‘Sing a Song of Christmas’ is full of music, fun, frolic, and a solid message about what Christmas is all about.

“Our skits focus on the familiar carols that people hear at Christmas time ... every year.” The puppets also look at how familiar carols of old “can relate to their and our lives today. We share how certain carols relate to Jesus and His coming to Earth.

“People of every age can enjoy a puppet show,” Payne added. “It spans the

generations and shares a message with everyone. Puppets reach out to others in ways other performances cannot.”

In addition to the puppet show, everyone, including parents, families and friends, will enjoy crafts, singing, and old-fashioned fun at Christmas for Kids. Participants should register at the door. For more information call the Trinity school office at 766-2029 or the church office 766-3929.



The “roots” of this featured puppet troupe can be found in a youth ministry program called Hands 2 God Puppets, which began in 1995 at Eternal Love Lutheran Church in Appleton. Payne joined that group as a puppeteer in 1997. “After performing my first presentation, I knew that puppetry would be my future career,” she said.

A graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran College with a double major in English and theatre, Payne took over the puppetry troupe and incorporated in January 2006.

Today, Hands 2 Grow has a core group of three puppeteers, but depending on a show, the troupe can feature from one to six puppeteers using any number of the

500 puppets they have on hand to perform.

“We buy many of our puppets, but also build them. With new shows every few months, new characters like to make appearances,” Payne said. “We love to welcome new puppets to our workshop.”

Training comes in many forms depending on what capacity the puppeteers need to perform. Puppeteers build puppets; manipulate, act, and sing with them; build props, scenery, and stages; write scripts; work with the sound system; and do “whatever else needs to be done before, during and after a presentation,” she added.



Hands 2 Grow puppeteers have taken classes in theatre, English, and education, attended numerous national and international puppetry conferences and presented at teachers conventions and local and state child care conferences.

“We look at each opportunity as a training session,” Payne said. “Puppeteers need to be well-rounded because of the work they do and the many different groups they present to.”

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