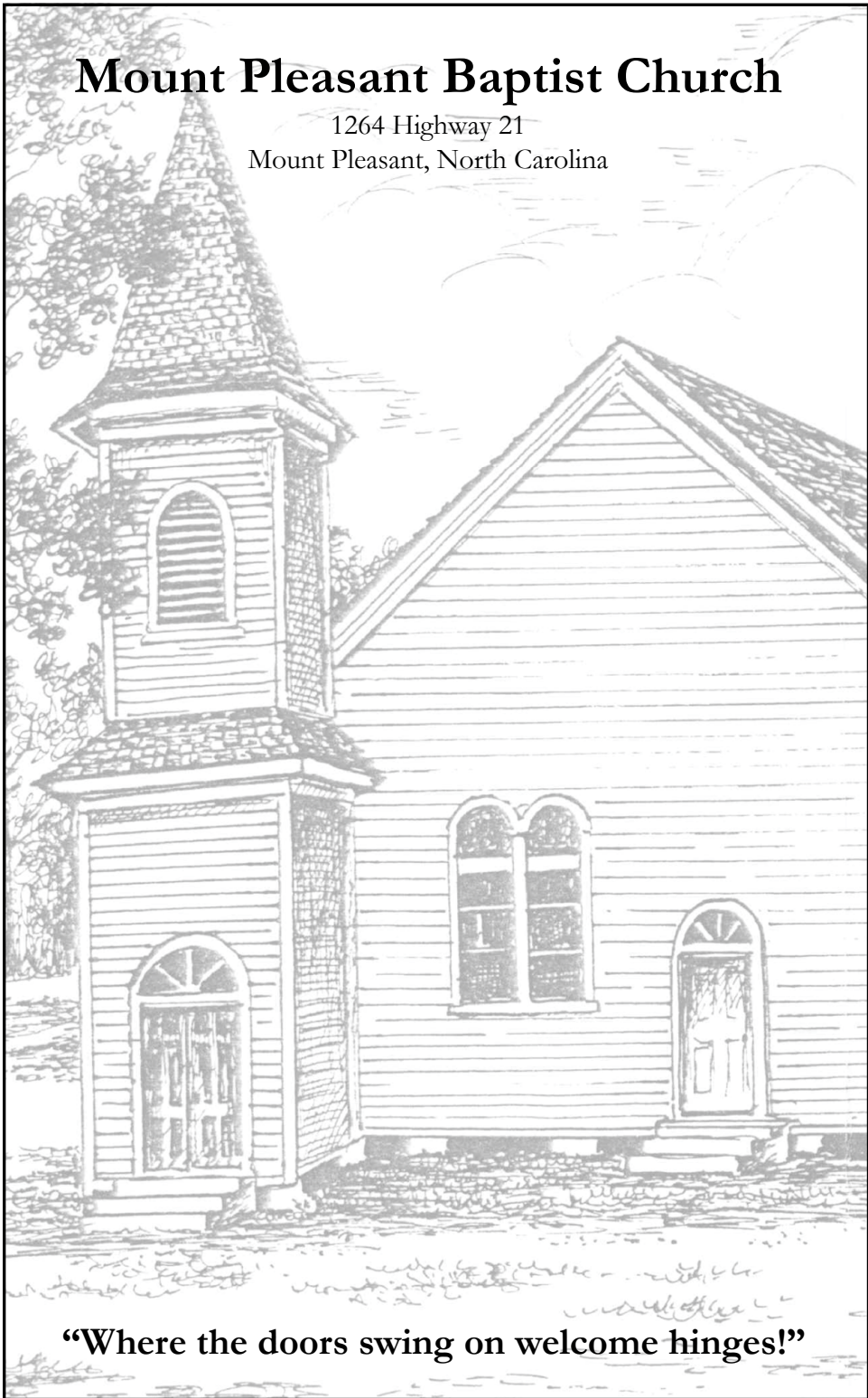


Mount Pleasant Baptist Church

1264 Highway 21
Mount Pleasant, North Carolina



“Where the doors swing on welcome hinges!”

Barbara Runnels Coats, FICF, RICP - Modern Woodmen
and Starkville Community Theatre present

SANDERS FAMILY Christmas

Written by CONNIE RAY

Conceived by ALAN BAILEY

Musical Arrangements by John Foley and Gary Fagin

Sanders Family Christmas is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

The Cast

(in order of appearance)

Reverend Mervin Oglethorpe Bob Swanson
June Sanders..... Krista Vowell
Burl Sanders..... Paul Ruff
Denise Sanders..... Cindy Ruff
Dennis Sanders..... Grif Lippencott
Vera SandersMadeline Golden
Stanley Sanders..... Drew Dieckmann

Scenes & Setting

Mount Pleasant Baptist Church
Just outside Mount Pleasant, North Carolina
Thursday, December 24, 1941

Act One

7:00 p.m., inside the church

Act Two

About 30 minutes later

There will be a 10-minute intermission between acts.



The Crew

Director	Pattye Archer
Assistant Director	Derek Aaron
Production Assistant.....	Patricia Coley
Stage Manager.....	Derek Aaron
Musical Assistance.....	Jennifer Davis, Carole Sorenson Drew Dieckmann and Paul Ruff
Lighting Design.....	Thomas La Foe
Lighting Operator.....	Daniel Swanson
Properties.....	The Cast and Crew
Costumes	Pattye Archer, The Cast and Melanie Harris
Poster Artwork	Louie P. Gallo
Photography	Dianna Janus
Box Office.....	Cam McMillen, Gabe Smith and Marsha Williams

Set Construction

Marty Haug

Derek Aaron, Carley Barnett, Lana Barnett, Patricia Coley,
Stephen Cunetto, Drew Dieckmann, Madeline Golden, Nate Greve,
Grif Lippencott, Paul Ruff, Bob Swanson, Nate Swanson,
Henry Swanson, Krista Vowell and Jacob Whatley

Special Thanks

Bert Montgomery and University Baptist Church
Rev. Walton W. Jones and the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection
Jeff Morgan and Artesia Baptist Church
Melanie Harris and Theatre MSU
Starkville Academy Elementary Music
Barbara Coats, Patricia Coley, Stephen Cunetto, Karen Dieckmann,
Debbie Dunaway, Christian Dunne (we miss you), Louie Gallo,
Dennis Graham, John Graham, Lynda Graham, Melissa Grimes,
Brian Hawkins, Chris Harper, Tonya Hays, Dianna Janus,
Paula Mabry and Chase Nicholson

The Music - Act 1

Good Christian Men Rejoice

The Sanders Family

Christmas Time's A Comin'

The Sanders Family

Angels We Have Heard on High

The Sanders Family

Country Kind of Christmas

The Sanders Family

Cactus Christmas Tree

Denise and Dennis with the Sanders Family

Merry Christmas Down Home

Burl with the Sanders Family

I Wonder as I Wander

Denise Sanders

Christmas in the Mountains

Burl, Stanley, Dennis and Vera Sanders, and Reverend Oglethorpe

Patriotic Medley

Onward Christian Soldiers

Dennis with the Sanders Family and Reverend Oglethorpe

On the Battlefield

The Sanders Family and Reverend Oglethorpe

Keep on the Firing Line

The Sanders Family and Reverend Oglethorpe

Hold Fast to the Right

Vera Sanders

The Music - Act 2

Did You Ever Go Sailing

Stanley with Denise, Burl and Dennis Sanders

Longing for the Hallelujah Day

The Sanders Family and Reverend Oglethorpe

I've Been Changed

Reverend Oglethorpe with the Sanders Family

Christmas Around the World

Noche de Paz

The Sanders Family and Pastor Oglethorpe

Grandpa's Done Gone Crazy

Denise and Dennis with the Sanders Family and Reverend Oglethorpe

Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella

Denise and Vera Sanders and Reverend Oglethorpe

Nose to Nose

The Sanders Family and Reverend Oglethorpe

Away in a Manger

Burl and Vera Sanders with the Sanders Family

Caroling Bells Medley

Caroling, Caroling

Jingle Bells

Christmas Bells

With Bells On

June with the Sanders Family and Reverend Oglethorpe

Beautiful Star of Bethlehem

The Sanders Family

Carols with the Congregation

Go Tell it On the Mountain

The Sanders Family and Reverend Oglethorpe

About the Cast

Drew Dieckmann (Stanley)

Drew makes his return to the stage at SCT as Stanley Sanders. A local musician and songwriter, Drew first appeared onstage at SCT as Rev Oglethorpe in 2007. Since then, he's been involved with several productions scattered over the years. "It really is like coming home," he says of SCT. On his castmates he remarks, "I have such an honest affection for my talented friends and their characters; I am beyond grateful to be part of this show again!" Drew would like to thank his wife Karen and children Thomas and Mary for their constant support and love. "I couldn't do it without y'all!!!"

Madeline Golden (Vera)

Madeline is happy to be back at Mount Pleasant singing with her Sanders family, and she wants you to "scoot up to the edge of your pew" and enjoy this wonderful, heart-warming show. Madeline has been performing with SCT for nearly 40 years and while she has a whole bunch of shows under her belt, "Vera" is the role she has played more than any other. Madeline first joined Paul and Krista as original members of the Sanders in "Smoke on the Mountain" during the 2005-2006 season. She reprised the role for the 2007 award-winning MTA and SETC production of the show, and then for "Sanders Family Christmas" 15 years ago. And of course, she was back in "Smoke" last October. She has loved every grouping of "family members" over the years but is so happy to be together with these talented performers again, and to have Drew back in the fold again. "Thank you for joining us here at the Playhouse and enjoy this evening of song and celebration!"

Grif Lippencott (Dennis)

Grif was extremely excited to get the call about the Sanders Family coming back and was even more excited to hear that he gets to play more banjo this time around. Even with a change in role in the family, Grif was just happy with the opportunity and ready to tackle a new character, especially one that he didn't have to endure makeup to age himself a few years. It has been a tough year personally but SCT has been such a supportive family to him and he cherishes them dearly to help him handle the storms of life. He still takes care of the cows and chickens when not on stage and has been working hard to improve his musical craft and believes the whole family this time around is much stronger musically. Grif hopes you enjoy our take on bluegrass Christmas and comedy!

Paul Ruff (Burl)

Paul Ruff has played some wildly different parts this year. Back in the spring, he portrayed the misogynist “Franklin Hart” in our production of *9 to 5—The Musical*. About a month ago, he reprised his role as “Otto Frank” in *Anne and Emmett*, a cooperative effort between SCT and Theatre MSU. And now he returns as “Burl Sanders,” a role he first played at SCT back in 2006 but revisited just last year in our revival of *Smoke on the Mountain*. He would like to thank Pattye, the crew, and his fellow castmates for all the hours worked and challenges overcome. And to his lovely wife, “Break a leg! I love you, babe!”

Cindy Ruff (Denise)

Glad to be back on stage with the Sanders family and returning to Mount Pleasant, Cindy is thrilled to revisit her role as “Denise.” You may have recently seen Cindy as “Judy” in *9 to 5* or back in 2018 as “Alice” in *The Addams Family*. She sends love and thanks to her onstage family and a big THANK YOU to Pattye, Derek, and Patricia! “Thank y’all for having us.”

Bob Swanson (Reverend Oglethorpe)

Bob returns to the Starkville Community Theatre stage as “Rev. Mervin Oglethorpe” (previously having played the role in 2021’s *Smoke on the Mountain*). Other stage credits include playing “Bert” in *Mary Poppins* (Tupelo Community Theatre) and performing in the Johnny Cash musical revue *Ring of Fire* (TCT Off-Broadway). Bob sends his love and appreciation to his family (wife, Meredith, and three boys – Daniel, Nate and Henry) and would like to thank directors Pattye and Derek for support and encouragement. As for his castmates, he would like to thank them for welcoming him into the Sanders Family. “Y’all are so talented!”

Krista Vowell (June)

Krista Vowell is happy to welcome you all back to Mount Pleasant. “The first time we all were here was over 15 years ago in *Smoke on the Mountain*, and shortly thereafter, *Sanders Family Christmas*. Revisiting this family has been such a fun experience. We are grateful for the memories shared from years ago, and for new memories made.” When she’s not clanging a bell or twiddling some spoons, Krista is the Elementary Principal at Starkville Academy and is the proud mama of Peyton and Meghan—who spent many hours in this church, ahem, theatre themselves. Krista truly hopes that this show creates a warmth in your hearts for Christmas and for what we are celebrating. “Hey, Bruce, when I ring the bell tonight, it’s for you—although I know you already have those wings.”

A Note From the Director

Christmas times' a comin' and if you're having trouble finding your holiday spirit, well you've come to the right place. The Sanders family and Reverend Oglethorpe are happy to bring you a down-home gospel-singin', handbell-ringin', banjo-slappin', toe-tappin' good time!

It is such a gift for me to be back with my Sanders family. In 25 years of directing, it is hard to imagine another group of characters who have had more of an impact on me. I have loved them since 2006 and I have adored this show since I directed it in 2007. Four of the seven actors you will see onstage tonight were in that production 15 years ago. What a blessing to revisit these characters, these songs, and these wonderful, heart-warming moments with Madeline, Paul, Krista and Drew. Add to that having Bob, Grif and Cindy back from last year's production of *Smoke* and well – it just doesn't get any better. "I do not know what I could have possibly done in my small life to deserve to be in their talented midst," but I am forever grateful.

I know you will show your appreciation to the performers tonight - it would be impossible not to. They are just that good! But please take a moment to look over the special thanks section in the program. It really does take a village to pull off a successful production and SCT has the best volunteers! I am grateful to each person listed.

But I want to add an extra special thank you to my awesome assistant director Derek, and production assistant, Patricia. This show would not have been possible without the two of you. And my heartfelt thanks to Thomas, Stephen, Louie, Barbara, Lynda, and to my family for loving and supporting me always.

I truly believe the greatest gifts cannot be unwrapped – and this show and the friendships it has brought me are proof of that. I also know the holidays can be stressful and challenging and hard. But I truly believe they can also be wonderful if you let yourself enjoy the little things and be grateful for all things.

"Life is short. Times is fast. No replay. No rewind. So enjoy every moment as it comes."

Pattye

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Susan & Walter
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STARKVILLE
MISSISSIPPI'S COLLEGE TOWN



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This project is supported in part by funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency, and in part, from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

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next production. Thank you!

Congratulations to the cast of *Terms of Endearment*

February 16 - 25, 2023

Directed by Christopher Walrath



Aurora Greenway Elizabeth Williams
Emma Greenway Sara Wade
Patsy Clark Jessica Jolly
Garret Breedlove Larry Graves
Flap Horton Ryan Bergman
Doris/Nurse Regan Plunkett
Rudyard/Dr. Maise Jacob King



Christmas Carols

Please sing along.



Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born king
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born king

The First Noel

The First Noel the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep
Noel Noel Noel Noel
Born is the King of Israel!

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem
O come and behold Him, born the King of Angels
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord
