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Communications

November 25, 2014

Nathan Rouse ('02) to Stage "The Birth" During Dimensions Program

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. — Gardner-Webb University will host stage performer and GWU alumnus Nathan Rouse ('02) on Tuesday, Dec. 2, in the final Dimensions program of the fall semester.

Rouse will perform part of the nativity drama, "The Birth," a theatrical production he has directed and performed for nine years to tell the Christmas story through the monologue perspectives of the innkeeper, the wise man, and the shepherd. The show takes place on a mostly empty stage, where actors speak, sing and dance to transport the audience to the nativity scene through imagination.

Rouse based the material for the monologues on the writings of Frederick Buechner, a well-known Presbyterian minister and Pulitzer Prize-nominated author of more than 30 published books.

"When reading Buechner for the first time, it really struck me, the depth of the characters from whose perspective he writes," Rouse explained in a 2011 interview about "The Birth." "We often forget these are real people. We think of the innkeeper as just somebody who utters one line — 'There's no room in the inn.' But the monologues help us imagine what that experience must have been like for him. You can imagine that experience haunting him afterward, that he might run from that memory rather than find joy in retelling the story. That perspective put meat on the bones of these characters for me for the first time."

The performance at GWU is set to begin at 9:25 a.m. in Stewart Hall of the Tucker Student Center. The event is free and open to the public.

"It is a joy to have Nathan return to his alma mater and perform this signature work," shared Dr. Tracy Jessup, GWU vice president for Christian Life and Service and senior minister to the University.

Rouse has performed on stages throughout the Southeast for almost two decades. He currently works with Starving Artist Productions, a Charlotte-based entertainment organization.

A full performance of “The Birth” will be staged at Zoar Baptist Church in Shelby, N.C., on Dec. 2 at 7 p.m. For more on Rouse and “The Birth,” visit astarvingartistproduction.com.

Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request 48 hours prior to the event. Please call 704-406-4264 or email servicerequests@gardner-webb.edu with your request.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University’s purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).