

'Broadway Prayers' draws from some secular sources

By KIM KIMZEY
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Justin Addington, director of music ministries at Trinity United Methodist Church, says the pages of his hymnal aren't his only source of musical ideas. Broadway tunes can also inspire, he says.

"Broadway Prayers," a revue featuring music from shows such as "Annie," "Big River" and "Fiddler on the Roof," will be performed in the Fellowship Hall at Trinity United Methodist Church in Converse Heights. Shows start at 7 p.m. today and Saturday.

Along with more inspirational tunes, cast members will perform whimsical numbers such as "Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat" from

"Guys and Dolls."

"It has a spiritual basis, but it is a show," the music director said.

A group project

Addington selected the tunes, and though the show was originally his idea, he credits the cast and other volunteers for making it possible.

"I don't want this misconception that it was all my doing," he said. "Everyone involved has helped out."

Addington was "amazed" at the response and said the revue came together in a month.

"The whole church has gotten involved," he added.

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Leslie Hammond sings during the rehearsal of Broadway Prayers at Trinity United Methodist Church.

Narrated musical takes audience on a journey

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Addington considers the production a ministry outreach, too.

"We've pulled some people in from the community," he said.

Addington knew how talented some fellow churchgoers were after working with them in Spartanburg Little Theatre productions. About six people involved in "Broadway Prayers," including Addington, are also in rehearsals for the Little Theatre's upcoming production of "Bye Bye Birdie."

Addington asked Trinity church member Kathryn Harrison to write the narration for "Broadway Prayers."

Harrison, he said, has a "wealth of biblical knowledge," and the two have been in Little Theatre productions together.

But Harrison was initially hesitant and wondered how she could make all the songs have meaning within the framework of a narrative.

Her narration takes the audience on an imaginary trip representing life's journey. Broadway songs are performed along the high and low points of that journey and are interspersed with Scripture from



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Mike Trammell sings with the cast of "Broadway Prayers." The show will be performed at 7 p.m. today and Saturday.

the Old and New Testaments.

"I agree with Justin — something doesn't have to be in the hymnal to have words of inspiration," Harrison said.

"Broadway Prayers" features about 20 cast members.

Julie Stephens, director of the Children's Music Ministry at Trinity, is one of the performers. Also involved in local theater, she was impressed with Addington's idea.

"I thought it was really great," she said. "It never would have occurred to me."

Stephens hopes the audience leaves "uplifted and with an appreciation of how much

music outside of church is still spiritual in nature. That's really what I've gotten out of it."

Addington said the production lasts about an hour. Refreshments will be served afterward, courtesy of church members. Although the show is free to attend, donations will be accepted to fund similar projects in the future.

Addington hopes people who come to the show will want to become a part of Trinity or possibly participate in the congregation's next production. He also hopes the church will eventually be able to develop a drama ministry.