ALL SAINTS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The All Saints Christmas Pageant: A Brief History and Philosophy

There has been a Christmas pageant at All Saints during the service on either Advent 3 or 4 for the past 33 years.

Each year the pageant has been the children's Christmas gift to their parents, grandparents, friends, and congregation, and it is their joy and delight in doing it that has driven the determination to keep it going. Even through the pandemic there was a pageant.

Over the years, we've watched the little ones as they team with the "big kids" and how they look forward to when they will get to be the camel, or a shepherd, or an archangel, or MARY. Young adults who have outgrown taking a part come back to help herd the alleluia angels or make or move scenery or even bring their little ones to be sheep or angels.

It is one of the services that people (adults and children) bring their friends to.

The pageant has always had some very specific guidelines in its creation and production that make it successful, even if it's not a polished theatrical production.

- Every child who wants a part, gets one and they decide if it's a speaking or non-speaking role. (Little angels and sheep do not have speaking roles, but they will as they grow into shepherds and Magi and archangels!)
- The script is adjusted to the need of each child and roles are developed based on each child's level of comfort.
- Since adding music, the children decide if they feel comfortable singing (solo, in a group, or not), and the script is adjusted accordingly.
- We don't do what is not FUN! There's work involved, but the work is joyful.
- The pageant script is tied to language and scripture the children hear and use in atrium. It supports our children's formation program, inviting them to consider familiar stories and scripture in connection to what is going on in our world, our culture, and our lives.
- Each year we talk about what themes they see in the script and what they think the audience will understand from seeing this production.

For 26 years former rector Bonnie Perry (now Bishop of the Diocese of Michigan) directed; church school coordinator Polly Tangora "produced," co-writing the script in direct consultation with the children; and a variety of congregation members provided technical advice and support. Every year our church musicians—Margaret McCamant in the past and Colin Collette and Sam Shull today—support our pageant. Thanks to Eileen Krause's audio-visual expertise we now hear so much better what the children are saying (and out-of-town relatives can see them online). Parishioner Lesley Rivers has directed each year since 2019. With Lesley's recent move to Oregon and as Polly steps back, we now welcome a new team of directors, writers, and producers.