

Church festival depicts medieval social life

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(January 7, 2008) — The inside of the Third Presbyterian Church was transformed into a 14th-century setting Saturday and Sunday as parishioners morphed into members of a medieval court.

A cast, choir and orchestra of more than 100 put on The Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival, which event organizer Peter DuBois of Brighton called a performance within a performance. The festival is a tribute that blends the sacred and secular of the medieval social scene, when lords would invite their communities to celebrate the Epiphany with a reenactment of the three kings' visit to the newborn Jesus.

An audience that overflowed into the three balconies in the church at Meigs Street and East Avenue watched as a fanfare welcomed the royal court, followed by a giant boar's head carried in stately procession by two beefeaters and an entourage of cooks. The boar's head symbolizes the triumph of good over evil, Christ's triumph over the devil.

During "The Twelve Days of Christmas," children carried banners representing the dozen gifts to the front of the church.

Backstage, DuBois' wife, Mary, made sure the youngest members of the cast timed their entrances just right.

"They are like little horses ready to charge," said Mary DuBois, the stage manager. "They are just so ready for their moment in the spotlight."

The DuBois' 16-year-old son, David, a Brighton High School junior, was one of the two woodsmen that chased around the oversized, ribbon-wrapped Yule log as they raised a saw over their heads during a rendition of "Deck the Hall." They were followed by a pair of juggling jesters and an acrobat that flipped her way down the center aisle.

After the cast filed out, the lights dimmed. A monk looked up at the star of Bethlehem suspended in the air above the altar as the Yule sprite, the star of the show, pranced towards him. The sprite, 7-year-old Olivia Rye, grabbed his hand and they skipped down the aisle and out of the church to a standing ovation.

Olivia, a second-grader at Klem South Elementary School in Webster, said it was her favorite part of the show.