

## Arts

# DICKENS

## with hydraulic lifts

Special effects abound in Destiny Christian Church's 'The Gospel According to Scrooge'

by Andrew Miller  
THISWEEK NEWSPAPERS

It's "A Christmas Carol" with high tech flair.

Destiny Christian Church (DCC) in Burnsville is pulling out all the stops in the special effects department for its production of "The Gospel According to Scrooge."

Using trap doors, hydraulic lifts, two huge 70-gallon tanks of carbon dioxide and 120 pounds of dry ice, the church is hoping to provide as much a feast for the eyes as a message for the soul.

"It's quite an orchestration," said Jeff Stromwall of Lakeville, the show's technical director and a DCC staff member. "It blows most everybody away when they come to see it."

Stromwall and the tech crew have been logging long hours to perfect the special effects.

"The last two days I've had six hours of sleep," Stromwall said at rehearsal Tuesday evening. At the previous night's rehearsal he'd left the church at 4 a.m. and returned at 8 a.m. Since October he's been putting in 10- to 12-hour days,

working like the rest of the cast and crew to create what director Jerry Gill hopes will be a professional-calibre production.

Rehearsals began in mid-September, and because the show is being presented in the church itself, the tech crew designed a revolving set — on Sundays, the office set in "The Gospel According to Scrooge" spins around, and on the other side is the set-up for the church's band.

The show opened Dec. 1 and runs through Dec. 17. The Christian adaptation of the Charles Dickens classic features a cast of about 70 actors, the lion's share of them DCC members.

"Anytime that you get amateur talent you never know what to expect, but I'm amazed at the amount of talent in this church," said Gill, of Chanhassen.

"They have a real dedication. These people have put in hours and hours of rehearsal," Gill added.

This is the second year DCC has staged "The Gospel According to Scrooge," and the quality of the show has improved as actors have



Photo by Rick Orndorf

Destiny Christian Church's "The Gospel According to Scrooge," the Christian adaptation of the Charles Dickens classic "A Christmas Carol," features a cast of about 70 actors, the lion's share of them members of the Burnsville church.

gained some experience, said Gill, who also directed the show in 2005.

Last year about 80 percent of the cast had never performed on stage before. This year, about half the cast has previous acting experience.

DCC member David Death, 23, plays Scrooge in the production. Though it's the first time he's been cast in the title role, it's his second stint in the show, having first landed the role of Tiny Tim 10 years ago when "The Gospel

According to Scrooge" was held at Cedar Ridge Church in Eagan.

Death hopes that audiences will walk away from the dramatic comedy with a message about Christian life.

"[Scrooge] lives his life with a completely inaccurate focus," Death said. "He sees the seeds he's planted come to fruition and finds out they're not the crop he was looking for."

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### Show times

Destiny Christian Church in Burnsville will present "The Gospel According to Scrooge" Dec. 2, 8-9, and 15-17 at 7 p.m., Dec. 16-17 at 2 p.m. and Dec. 3 and 10 at 3 p.m. Reserved seating is \$15 and general admission is \$10. To order tickets call the box office at (952) 890-1477 or log on to [www.destinycc.org](http://www.destinycc.org).

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