

# Outdoor Living Nativity - A Telling of the Christmas Story

Excitement is building at Brookside Christian Reformed Church as this December marks the tenth year that church members have presented a Living Nativity for the Grand Rapids community. Hundreds of members are involved with details such as set building, sewing costumes, traffic and parking safety, serving hot chocolate, lighting milk jug luminaries that line the church drives and passing out posters to local businesses.

Using the set built by church members we are attempting to portray an authentic setting for the drama, much like Bethlehem looked in Jesus' day. A family from our church brings their llama for the wise men to lead as they follow the star and several sheep for the shepherds to tend as they warm themselves by the fire. Angels appear to fill the night with song and Mary and Joseph and the baby complete the scene.

Participants in the outdoor performances range in age from five year olds to retirees. The playing of an audio track allows the actors to do just that, and no one has to worry about learning lines. Different persons fill the positions on each of the three nights.

The script was written to reflect the wonderings of a child about this holy event, which actually began at creation and continues until Christ returns. The church's children's choir and the adult choir, as well as several soloists have recorded songs on the audio track to compliment the narration and voices of the main characters. Middle schoolers run the lights and sound board from inside the church as the head technician gives directions while viewing things from outside on the lawn.

Each evening, the elderly and very small children can view the presentation on a large screen located inside the warm and comfortable church. Hot chocolate and homemade cookies are served throughout the evenings. Children can participate in making a Christmas craft in the church's activity center as well as interact with *Neighbors in Nazareth*.

Ten years ago, several Brookside members had a dream to put together an advent activity that would be a blessing both for our church members as well as for the community at large. This has certainly happened. Our attendance ranges from 1000 – 1200 persons over the three nights. The event occurs no matter what the weather conditions might be. Persons from all over West Michigan have attended and many have told us that coming to our Living Nativity has become a tradition for their family. We invite you to join us this year!

Brookside Christian Reformed Church  
Corner of 36<sup>th</sup> Street and Kalamazoo SE in Grand Rapids

Friday, December 9  
Saturday, December 10  
Sunday, December 11  
at 7:00PM, 7:30PM, 8:00PM each evening.

- Come for a memorable family outdoor experience – dress warmly!
- Hot chocolate and cookies served inside
- Crafts for Kids / Visit with Neighbors in Nazareth
- FREE – no tickets needed
- **Signing for the hearing impaired available on Saturday**
- Visit [www.brooksidecrc.org](http://www.brooksidecrc.org) or call the church 452-3191 for more information