

ALBUM,

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began composing together within the first years of their budding relationship, two of the songs on *Merry Christmas* were written in their first year of marriage.

Nate and Liz released their first album in 2009 – the result of a great deal on studio time – and they never stopped writing songs. They chose the name Melody and Truth because they envisioned it as a rotating group of friends collaborating over music.

The Dunns wanted to record together again, but it wasn't until earlier this year that the conversation began in earnest. When they decided to go for it, a Christmas album seemed like the obvious choice.

"When we try to find Christmas music that is rich in melody and musicality, we don't find a lot and we saw how we could fill that gap," Liz said.

They chose tracks inspired by the paths they've walked.

"It's all sacred Christmas music and an invitation to come hear about Christ," Liz said. "Some of the songs are more of a mellow Norah Jones-type and others are much bigger."

Nate said he'd come to miss the days when he had time to sit and look at the lights on the family's Christmas tree.

"We used to sit down together and do that, but life gets busy. The whole time we were recording I had the thought of sitting down in front of the tree and taking that pause again," Nate said. He said the family has built it into their schedule this year.

The Dunns enlisted the help of about four dozen friends and acquaintances to bring the project together including a number of Keizer-based musicians. Members of the McNary High School choirs and orchestras all took part in the recording and Keizer Police Det. John Troncoso (Ret.) played all electric guitars on the album. Even before they started recording, the Dunns raised more than \$7,200 from

68 backers on Kickstarter.com to pay for studio time and other expenses. Their daughters Ingrid and Gretchen also sing on the album.

Time in the studio rarely went off without a hitch. Everything from nearby businesses to thunderstorms and illness had a way of interfering with the process, but they thought back to that conversation with their kids when the going got rough.

"There were 50 times when, if we hadn't had that conversation, we would have just walked away from it," Nate said.

The result is vindicating, a way for them to spread the message of their faith and a path to follow as future projects beckon.

"We know we're musicians and called to do this, but we don't necessarily want to tour. Making music means extra work, but we still did it. And, now we know more about where we can go to connect with other people. We have a template, and we want to do a worship album next spring," Liz said.

GED,

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want to be here for three more years and we don't want to send them out into the world with no GED and no high school diploma."

The students will meet for two 90-minute periods each day to prepare for the GED tests, which cover reading, writing, math, science and social studies. When students have successfully completed online modules, they will be given a GED practice

test. If they pass they will be dropped from McNary, which will then notify the learning center that the student is ready for the test.

How long that process takes depends on the student.

"It's all about their individual skills," Rhodes said. "One kid might have their skills up to speed in all four core areas in one month and another might take the entire semester."

"We're really excited. Right now what we see is they get on the waiting list, they disappear and we don't have a chance to make a difference

for them and by keeping them right here in our building and preparing them for the test here, we feel like we're going to increase their success rate."

The classes will be led by two current McNary teachers, Patricia Farris and William Bond, who previously taught a similar program for 19 years at a junior college in Florida.

"I'm excited. I'm pumped about it," Bond said. "We have students all over Keizer that school is not a good fit for them. They have other responsibilities. So it will give others the opportunity to see there is a different way."

PARADE,

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double the number that were included in the 2015 parade. The volunteer coordinators of the previous parade opted to retire in early 2016 and were unable to find replacements at the time. The Keizer Chamber stepped up in September to take on the mantle.

Bethell said she's eagerly anticipating a Grinch-themed float being put together by Keizer's Encompass Management & Consulting and a commode-themed entry sponsored by Ace Septic and Chemical Toilet.

"We are also putting a big focus on the sponsor banners. This year the banners will be lit up as well as the floats and I don't think that's happened in the past," Bethell said.

The Keizer Holiday Lights Parade is sponsored by the Keizer Chamber of Commerce, the City of Keizer and Bonaventure of Keizer Station.

In addition to the parade itself, Bethell and members of the Chamber are enlisting local businesses to add to the festivities.

Lakepoint Community Church will have four hot cocoa and candy cane locations; El Patron Mexican Grill will set up shop in the northwest corner of the Keizer Village parking lot; Willamette Valley Bank will be hosting a hot cocoa station in the bank and closed parking lot for parade spectators to set up chairs; a youth group from St. Edward Catholic Church will be serving up warm treats; and Tony's Kingdom of Comics is hosting a toy drive at the shop, 3856 River Road N. Starbucks will stay open until 11 p.m.

"We are also partnering with the Salem Food Truck Association to have food trucks set up along the route," Bethell said.

Care is being taken to find food trucks that would not compete with nearby Keizer businesses, she added.

Staging for the parade begins at 3:30 p.m. on Lockhaven Drive North between McClure Street N. and River Road.

The parade will start at the intersection of Lockhaven and River Road at 7 p.m. and travel south ending at Glynbrook Street North.

Bethell urged spectators to find spots north of Glynbrook for best viewing.

"As soon as the parade hits Glynbrook, we are going to be pulling floats off the route and we want everyone to get the full experience," she said.

River Road will close at 6 p.m. to make way for the Chamber's annual Jingle Dash, a 5K fun run, which begins at 6:15 p.m.

The run will begin at Town & Country Lanes.

Cost is \$17 to \$25 for youth, depending on the day of registration, and \$27 to \$37 for adults.

Registration can be complete online at keizerchamber.com.

Run participants are encouraged to dress up and compete for the best costume award. Cinnamon rolls, hot cocoa, and coffee will be waiting at the finish line.

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