

KeizerCommunity

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Whiteaker choir Cabaret a hot ticket

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

Even in a bigger venue, Andy Thomas, choir director at Whiteaker Middle School, decided on two nights for the annual Cabaret show.

And that decision has paid off as the first performance, Thursday, Feb. 23, has already sold out.

"Parents like to come more than once," Thomas said. "The kids work so hard and put so much into it, to only do it one night, short changes. For the time, money and effort, it's worth it to do it two."

The second show is Friday, Feb. 24. Both performances begin at 7 p.m. at Salem Alliance Church, 555 Gaines St. NE, Salem.

Tickets, which include admission to the show, dessert and entry into raffle drawings, are \$10 and available at the Whiteaker main office.

The cabaret, which along with singing, also includes acting, dancing and lighting effects, is a fundraiser for the Whiteaker choir. Half the money goes to future choir trips and the other half to music, supplies and scholarships.

The theme for this year's



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

The Whiteaker Middle School choir performs songs from *Aladdin* during a practice for its upcoming Cabaret on Feb. 23-24 at Salem Alliance Church.

show is musical theater.

"It's big and fun and so exciting having so many people

there and getting to put on these big shows," said eighth grader Bethany Dunegan,

who is most looking forward to an *Aladdin* medley.

Whiteaker eighth grader Elise Myers said her favorite is *Wicked*.

"It's really dramatic and dark," she said.

Along with *Aladdin* and *Wicked*, the choir is also performing songs from *Annie* and a collection from different pirate musicals.

Thomas has 200 students

in his six choirs that will perform on both nights. During *Wicked*, the McNary Highlanders Classics will also join in.

"We're trying to create a nice connection, bridging the kids from middle school to high school," Thomas said.

Performing in front of so many people is a confidence booster for the middle schoolers.

"You go up in front of a thousand people in the audience and you're in middle school and you perform and the audience is clapping and going crazy, what that does for them personally, especially in middle school is exponentially more than any other level because they're so developmentally going through so much and they're more self-conscious," Thomas said.

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