

## Churches plan live Nativity scenes

Many area churches will soon begin staging living Nativity scenes, with costumed Marys and Josephs holding their children next to mangers sheltered by stables.

A few take the live Nativity to the next level by presenting an interpretation of what life might have been like in Bethlehem the night Jesus was born.

Return to Bethlehem, a popular one in North Augusta, is up first. It opens next week by Grace United Methodist Church.

These productions include elaborate sets, live animals and costumed actors in an effort to bring guests as close as possible to Jesus' humble infancy. Many also include carolers, hot chocolate and hayrides.

Here are a few walk- or ride-through Nativity productions scheduled in the coming weeks. All events are free.

### **RETURN TO BETHLEHEM**

**WHEN:** 6-9 p.m. Dec. 3-6

**WHERE:** Grace United Methodist Church, 639 Georgia Ave.

**DETAILS:** Return to Bethlehem is an outdoor presentation of events the night Jesus was born. For the 11th year, guests will stroll through a re-created Bethlehem, where they will see period musicians, live animals, tradesmen going about their daily work and families gathered around campfires. The walk culminates with a stroll past a stable, where Mary holds her baby near the manger. Guests who are not able to walk are permitted to drive through the presentation the first 30 minutes of each night. Biblical guides take groups of 25 through the village.

**MORE INFO:** [gotgraceumc.org](http://gotgraceumc.org)

### **PATH TO CHRISTMAS**

**WHEN:** 7-9 p.m. Dec. 6-7

**WHERE:** First Assembly of God, 350 May Ave., Lincolnton, Ga.

**DETAILS:** Tractor-pulled trailers take guests through the life of Christ while a narrator tells the story of Christmas. The presentation includes live music, a live Nativity and scenes from Christ's Resurrection and Ascension.

**MORE INFO:** (706) 359-7237

### **ONE NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM**

**WHEN:** 7-9 p.m. Dec. 8-10

**WHERE:** First Baptist Church of Thomson, 253 Jackson St.

**DETAILS:** Guests will drive through the night Christ was born, from Caesar Augustus' decree that a census be taken – which took Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem – to the trip, Jesus' birth and the news being delivered to shepherds and Wise Men.

**MORE INFO:** [www.fbcthomson.org](http://www.fbcthomson.org) or  
(706) 595-4252

### **HAYRIDE THROUGH THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

**WHEN:** 7-9 p.m. Dec. 11-14

**WHERE:** Columbia County Fairgrounds,  
5462 Columbia Road

**DETAILS:** Sharon Baptist Church in Appling presents its annual hayride. Guests can sip hot chocolate and listen to Christmas music while waiting their turn to ride through the presentation of 12 scenes depicting the life of Christ.

**MORE INFO:** (706) 541-0667 or  
[www.facebook.com/hayride.through.the.life.of.christ](http://www.facebook.com/hayride.through.the.life.of.christ)

### **LIVE DRIVE-THROUGH NATIVITY**

**WHEN:** 6:30-8:30 p.m. Dec. 13-14

**WHERE:** Augusta First Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 4301 Wheeler Road

**DETAILS:** Guests can experience Bethlehem and events the night Jesus was born.

**MORE INFO:** (706) 651-0412