

Musical youth pass Minster milestone

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

OPEN auditions are being held for the first-ever musical to be staged inside Stoke Minster.

Stoke Youth Musical Theatre Company, which recently won a Best Musical In Our Region award from the National Operatic and Dramatic Association, is planning its next show, Godspell.

A cast of about 40 young people is needed for the rendition of the 1970s musical, which takes to the stage at the church over five days in October.

Robert Clarke, spokesman for the company, said he was excited about staging the first musical at the historic church. He said: "The production is loosely based on the bible story and is going to have bags of dancing, singing and some great songs. "This will be the first time a musical has been presented in the church and we think the production is going to look and sound great. "With the theme of the show it would appear to be an ideal choice for the venue and both our group and the ministry of the church are very excited." The play depicts a colourful modern-day version of the gospels that centres on a group of young people who decide to follow and learn from Jesus.

People are required to fill the positions of the three main characters – Jesus, Judas and John the Baptist – as well as a number of disciples and chorus singers.

Backstage helpers are also required.

The musical has the same production team as the group's successful production of Les Miserables, which took to the stage at the Mitchell Memorial Theatre, in Hanley, in November.

Director Ian Wilson has produced musicals for All Saints Operatic Society in Leek's All Saints Church for the last eight years.

He said: "There will be lots of music people will know and recognise, like Day By Day and On The Willows.

"The musical will be staged down at the front of the church, in front of the altar, so people will get a really good view."

The Reverend Maureen Tideswell, associate minister from Stoke Minster, said: "I think having a musical at the church is a marvellous idea. "The acoustics in the church are excellent and we are often approached from people who are interested in staging concerts inside the church. "Having the gallery upstairs will be a big help because it will give people a good view of what is happening on the stage. "I think it will also get more young people involved with the church."

Pre-audition workshops will start on Wednesday, April 29 at Seabridge Community Centre, in Clayton, starting at 7.30pm. Auditions will then be held at Thistley Hough High School, in Penkhull, on Sunday, May 10. Those interested must be aged 21 or under. Newcomers are welcome.

The musical will be held from October 20 to 24. For more information about the auditions, call 01782 659156.