



Ahavaah

The Story of Christmas

DECEMBER 2024

DANCING TO END HUNGER
ALL PROFITS BENEFIT ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Ahavah is an original ballet dedicated to my beloved brother, Joshua Clayton Young, who taught me how to find God in the most unexpected places and how to love others. Look at what an impact you have had Josh!

I know we are still wishing on the same bright star.

I love you forever,
Elisa



Ahawah

The Story of Christmas

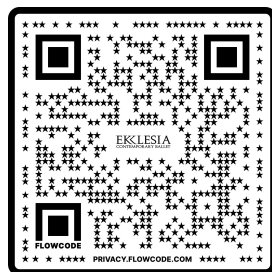
Saturday, December 7

1:00 & 6:00 pm

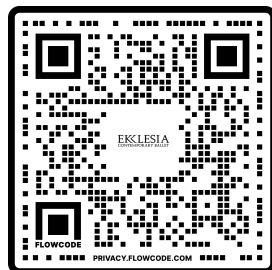
Sunday, December 8

4:00 pm

Follow us on Instagram:



Visit our Website
(ekkesiaballet.org):



Ahavaḥ

The Story of Christmas



All photography is strictly prohibited during the performance.



All videography is strictly prohibited during the performance.

A High Quality Digital Download of the Performance is available for purchase in the lobby or online at ekklesiaballet.org/ahavah



Please turn off cell phones during the performance.



Due to copyright restrictions, the soundtrack of Ahavaḥ is not available for purchase. The music for Ahavaḥ is provided under an ASCAP Music License.

Ahavaah

The Story of Christmas

presented by...

EKKLESIA

CONTEMPORARY BALLET



Ahavah is an original ballet written by Elisa Schroth.



Elisa Schroth

Artistic Director, Founder

Elisa Schroth received her BFA from the Belhaven College Dance Program and the Hartford Conservatory. She graduated from the Hartford Conservatory with a double major in Dance Performance and Pedagogy. Elisa danced professionally for Ballet Mississippi and Sonia Plumb Dance Company. Elisa is an American

Ballet Theater certified instructor in all levels. In 2005, Elisa founded Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet (ECB) and in 2020 she incorporated ECB as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that was recognized as a New Christian Community of The Episcopal Church. Elisa has choreographed many works that align with the company's mission to strengthen human connections while drawing attention to social injustices such as poverty, inequality and human suffering. In 2021, her work *Body and Land* received a Creation Care Grant from The Episcopal Church. *Body and Land* toured around Connecticut as a way to use dance as a vehicle for churches and communities to join hands in addressing climate change. In 2022, Elisa collaborated with internationally recognized composer Ameen Mokdad and Connecticut-based string ensemble Cuatro Puntos. Elisa created choreography on the company for 11 tracks of Mokdad's album, *The Curve*. *The Curve* had a successful sold-out tour in the Spring of 2023 and the fall of 2024. Elisa has presented works on the Psalms at Yale Divinity School and Duke Divinity School. Elisa's longest running work, her original theatrical ballet, *Ahavah*, explores dance and theology and is celebrating its 19th year.

Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet Mission Statement

Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet is a professional dance company comprised of artist-theologians whose goal is to create spaces where art and faith can flourish. Ekklesia's diverse repertory utilizes a full spectrum of emotional and physical vocabulary while addressing issues such as poverty, inequality, and human suffering.

Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet Board Members

Mary Blankson: Chair
Kasey Harding: Treasurer
Maria Bouffard: Secretary
Reverend Julie Hoplamazian: Director
Merly de le hoz Cookson: Director
Elisa Schroth: Artistic Director

EKKLESIA

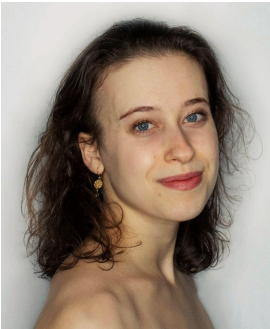
CONTEMPORARY BALLET



Sasha Biagiarelli **Assistant Director**

Sasha Biagiarelli grew up in Waterbury, CT dancing at Brass City Ballet. Sasha completed her BS in Dance Administration at Butler University in Indianapolis. She performed in ballets such as *The Nutcracker*, *Giselle*, and *Swan Lake*, as well as traveled to Eastern Europe to train and perform at ballet schools in Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Sasha graduated

Butler with Honors in 2018, and then joined Ekklesia as a Company Artist that same year. While at Ekklesia, Sasha has performed in original works by Elisa Schroth, Steve Rooks, Juan Rodriguez, Rodney Rivera, Fred Davis, Kevin Jenkins, the JA Collective, Claire Mazza, and Alejandro Ulloa, and has taught and performed in New York, Washington, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and throughout Connecticut, and has danced as a guest artist with Woodbury Ballet in CT and Ballet Initiative in Indiana. Sasha was promoted to Assistant Director of Ekklesia in 2022. This is Sasha's seventh season as a Company Artist and third season as Assistant Director.



Hope Blackburn-Shoup **Company Artist**

Hope Blackburn-Shoup grew up near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where she began her dance training at the Philadelphia Dance Theatre. With PDT, she attended annual Regional Dance America festivals and had the opportunity to portray lead classical roles like the Firebird and the Sugar Plum Fairy. Hope went on to study dance at Butler University, where she graduated with a BFA in Dance Performance and a BA in English Literature. Here, she invested herself in

dance, improvisation, and choreography. Her senior year, she earned a distinction for her choreography from Butler's dance department for her work, *By Name*. In 2021, Hope joined Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet where she currently dances, teaches, and choreographs under the artistic leadership of Elisa Schroth. She has performed in numerous works and new creations in her three years as an artist of the company, including *The Curve*, *Living Stories*, and *Body and Land*. She is an advocate for the transformative power of dance for all people. This year, she married her long time dance partner and best friend, Jacob Shoup!



Tiffany Oltjenbruns

Company Artist

Tiffany Oltjenbruns grew up in Woodstock, Georgia, where she began her formal dance training at the Atlanta Academy of Ballet and Dance. Then, she graduated Summa Cum Laude from Brenau University, where she earned a B.A. in Dance with a concentration in Pre-Physical Therapy. During her time at Brenau, she had the opportunity to work with several esteemed guest artists, including Jennifer Archibald, Joshua Blake Carter, Autumn Eckman, Nicholas Palmquist, Allyne Gartrell, and Jesse Zarritt. She was honored that her academic and dance achievements were recognized by being named Provost Scholar and the Outstanding Senior Dance Major. Alongside her studies, Tiffany danced with the Gainesville Ballet Company, where she played notable roles such as the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker* and Tinker Bell in *Peter Pan*. Tiffany's interests extend beyond performance; she is deeply invested in the choreographic process and has created works across various dance styles and levels. Her passion for teaching is equally strong, as she is committed to educating the next generation of dancers. Her professional career began right after college and she is now in her second season with Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet. To continue her love of contemporary dance, she also dances with Garet&Co. where she is in her first season as a Pro Member. Tiffany truly cherishes every opportunity to share her love of the art form and the positive impact it can have on those experiencing it.



Jenna Patton

Company Artist

Jenna Patton was born and raised in the suburbs of Atlanta, GA, training with Sugarloaf Ballet Company from the time she was 7 until high school graduation. She went on to attend Brenau University, graduating Summa Cum Laude with a B.A. in Dance and minors in both Theatre and Film Studies. During her time at Brenau, Jenna was a member of Gainesville Ballet Company, where she performed roles such as Peter Pan (*Peter Pan*), Dew Drop Fairy (*The Nutcracker*), and Toto (*Wizard of Oz*), and served on the faculty! As a dance major, she was thrilled to work with guest choreographers such as Autumn Eckman, Joshua Blake Carter, and Kaitlin Arena. Jenna brought two of her own choreographic works to the concert dance stage, and she also assisted with choreography for several musical theatre productions, most notably "9 to 5." In addition, Jenna has been deeply involved in the Atlanta film industry, having worked as Sadie Sink's (Max) photo double in the fourth season of *Stranger Things*. She began her professional career right out of college as a company artist with Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet, where she has been thrilled to help create God-glorifying art, and a guest artist with Dimensional Dance. Outside of the ballet studio, Jenna is a self-proclaimed coffee aficionado, a bookworm, and an unabashed theater kid.



Jacob Shoup **Company Artist**

Jacob Shoup is in his fourth season as a professional company artist at Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet. Jacob began dancing at age five in his home state of Ohio. A highlight of his young dance career was performing as a Hershey's Kiss in *Nutcracker*, during which he dropped his sister. He went on to train at Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, and at Butler University in

Indiana. Over the years, he has developed a deep passion for dance and for faith, and seeks new ways to combine these disciplines through work at Ekklesia. In addition to Ekklesia, Jacob has guest performed with Dimensional Dance and New England Ballet Theatre in various productions. Jacob loves teaching dance, choreographing, and being involved with the communities in CT. This summer he married his long time dance partner and best friend Hope.



Rebecca Salerno **Trainee**

A native to Higganum, Connecticut, Rebecca Salerno began dancing at the age of 3 at Miss Alane's Dance Academy where she studied tap, jazz, and ballet. At age 13, Rebecca joined A Needle in the Haystack Theatre under the direction of Nicole Phaneuf. Rebecca spent her summers attending Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet's summer intensives, receiving instruction from renowned dancers and choreographers such as: Darren McIntyre, Rodney Rivera, Juan Rodriguez, and Stephen Rooks, among others. Rebecca

attended Colby-Sawyer College and studied dance under former Rockette, Laura Shepherd. In 2021, Rebecca joined Ekklesia School of Ballet and has found herself blessed with many learning and performance opportunities. Rebecca spends her free time dancing, enjoying the outdoors with her dog, Bear, and creating costumes for Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet's company and affiliate school.



Matthew Benson

Guest Artist

Matthew is excited to be dancing with Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet company and making his debut for Ahavah! His past credits include; Choreographer *Bright Young Things at Phoenix Stage*, Eddie in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, Dance Captain/Ensemble in *Beauty and the Beast*, Al in *A Chorus Line*, U/S Howard and Max in *Judith*, Man in *The Worker*, and Mike in *A Chorus Line*.

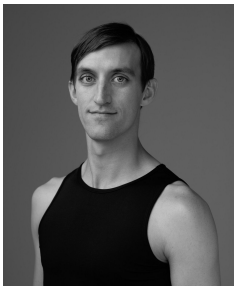


Caitlyn Sullivan

Guest Artist

Caitlyn Sullivan grew up in Watertown, CT and began her dance training at Connecticut Dance Theater and Brass City Ballet. At the age of 10, she joined the children's division of The Nutmeg Ballet Conservatory where she danced for 3 years. She then advanced to their pre-professional division where she rigorously trained for 6 years under the guidance of their esteemed faculty.

During her time at Nutmeg, she danced lead roles in *The Nutcracker* and in many original works by Victoria Mazzarelli and Thel Moore. Upon graduating from The Nutmeg, she graciously accepted a traineeship from Fort Wayne Ballet in Indiana where she trained this past year. She performed in the company's professional production of *The Nutcracker* as well as *Romeo and Juliet*. Alongside her classical training, she worked towards pursuing a higher education at the University of Saint Francis and studied dance history and modern techniques such as Horton and Graham. Caitlyn is grateful for all the opportunities dance has brought for her and is grateful to be guesting with Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet!



Paiter van Yperen

Guest Artist

Paiter van Yperen of Deep River, Connecticut.

Professionally he has performed, taught, and choreographed, nationally and internationally with incredible dance companies, theaters, and collectives such as: Ad Deum Dance Company, Open Sky Arts Collective, The Ailey School, etc. As well as spending

seven years with Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet, where he served as a company artist, Principal Dancer, resident choreographer, and Assistant Director.

Paiter is a Certificate graduate of the Alvin Ailey School in New York. Where he performed with the Ailey Student Performance Group and with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Alvin Ailey's classic work, "Memoria."

He also works closely with renowned artists, and scholars at Duke Divinity School and Duke Chapel to explore the intersection of movement, art, humanity, and faith. He is passionate about how art "moves", tells stories, and innately creates space and opportunity for the deepening of every kind of relationship.

Ahavaah

The Story of Christmas

Act I

Factory

The Street

The Book / Transition Scene 1

Creation

The Fall

Transition Scene 2 / Division of Sin

To Hope / Transition Scene 3

Rulers and Powers / Transition Scene 4

Two Sides

Transition Scene 5

Mary and Joseph

Night

Transition Scene 6

Spirit Bird

The Birth

INTERMISSION (15 mins)

Act II

Heavenly Host

A Light

Stars / Transition Scene 7

Magi

The Kingdom of God

Jesus / Transition Scene 8

Transition Scene 9

Cleansing the Temple

Lament

The Powers That Be

Dark Angels

Transition Scene 10

Resurrection

Finale

Cast

Jesus/Homeless Man.....	Jacob Shoup
Hope.....	Jenna Patton
Factory Workers.....	Sasha Biagiarelli, Hope Blackburn-Shoup, Rory Kimball, Tiffany Oltjenbruns, Myalene Schulze, Rebecca Salerno, Isabelle Weissberg
Factory Owner.....	Ellie van Yperen
Factory Kids.....	Adeline Letitia, Charlotte Mitchell, Cassidy Nelson, Lola Nelson, Sydney Petit, Asher Schroth, Wren Slaughter, Eloise Tetreault, Ainsley Ulstad
Bookstore Owner.....	Paite van Yperen
Wealthy Shoppers.....	Matthew Benson, Caitlyn Sullivan
Spirit Dancer.....	Rory Kimball
God.....	Jacob Shoup
Adam.....	Paite van Yperen
Eve.....	Hope Blackburn-Shoup
Serpent.....	Myalene Schulze
Creatures.....	Ellie van Yperen, Isabelle Weissberg
Creature Kids.....	Julia Cookson, Zoe DiPietro, Lillian Ferrall, Morgan King, Riley Linn, Isla Robertson, Lilian Romero, Marian van Siclen
King Herod.....	Matthew Benson
Prince of Fear.....	Tiffany Oltjenbruns
Mary.....	Hope Blackburn-Shoup
Joseph.....	Paite van Yperen
Messenger.....	Sasha Biagiarelli
Jews.....	Germaine Berio, Layla Cihocki, Myalene Schulze, Ellie van Yperen, Isabelle Weissberg
Gentiles	Matthew Benson, Rory Kimball, Tiffany Oltjenbruns, Caitlyn Sullivan, Rebecca Salerno (Understudy: Layla Cihocki)
Mary Magdalene.....	Ellie van Yperen
Lunar Queen	Myalene Schulze
Lunar Moth Leads.....	Lillian Ferrall, Morgan King, Riley Linn
Lunar Moths.....	Lila Champagne, Evelyn Ferrall, Ayla Korman, Cora Van Siclen
Gatekeepers.....	Matthew Benson, Germaine Berio, Rory Kimball, Caitlyn Sullivan
Archangels.....	Rebecca Salerno, Myalene Schulze, Ellie van Yperen, Isabelle Weissberg
Heavenly Host Angels.....	Germaine Berio, Layla Cihocki, Tiffany Oltjenbruns, Caitlyn Sullivan (Understudy: Rory Kimball)
Baby Jesus.....	Penelope Marquis (12/7 @1pm), Arden Bertini (12/7 @ 6om), Cecelia Krupski (12/8)

Toddler Jesus.....	Phoebe Tetreault
Younger Jesus.....	Jude Tetreault
Young Jesus.....	Asher Schroth
Jesus.....	Jacob Shoup
Stars.....	Quincy Arroyo, Chloe-Anne Cordero, Cecelia Hartel, Adelaide Marquis, Sable Seech, Miriam Spear, Josephine Ulstad
Magi.....	Myalene Schulze, Ellie van Yperen, Isabelle Weissberg
Chief Priests.....	Layla Cihocki, Rebecca Salerno, Ellie van Yperen
Pedestrians.....	Layla Cihocki, Germaine Berio, Caitlyn Sullivan
Inspector.....	Paiter van Yperen
Roman Soldiers.....	Sasha Biagiarelli, Rebecca Salerno, Myalene Schulze, Ellie van Yperen, Isabelle Weissberg
Dark Archangels.....	Sasha Biagiarelli, Ellie van Yperen
Dark Angels.....	Rory Kimball, Rebecca Salerno, Myalene Schulze, Isabelle Weissberg
Dark Angels Demi Corps.....	Adeline Letitia, Charlotte Mitchell, Cassidy Nelson, Lola Nelson, Sydney Petit, Wren Slaughter, Eloise Tetreault, Asher Schroth, Ainsley Ulstad
Ruler.....	Matthew Benson
Centurions.....	Clayton Schroth, Paiter van Yperen

Production Team

Artistic Director/Choreographer.....	Elisa Schroth
Story.....	Jon Schroth, Elisa Schroth
Assistant Director.....	Sasha Biagiarelli
Additional Choreography.....	Casey Slaughter
(Factory and Dark Angels Scenes)	
Additional Choreography (Magi Scene).....	Erica West
Projection Design.....	Jon Schroth
Lighting Designer.....	Chris Bell
Wardrobe Design and Construction	Rebecca Salerno
Makeup Artist.....	Cassidy Molino, Julie Nelson
Set & Prop Construction.....	Amy Arroyo, Rachel Martin, Betty O'Dell, John Tetreault, Erica West, Greg West
Sound Tech.....	Jason Feeney
Stage Manager.....	Erica West
Stage Crew.....	Mary Blankson, Josephine Blankson, Jessica Claude, Enrika Laredo, Christian Pinero, Javier Trinidad, Clayton Schroth, Greg West, C.J. Wiley
Stage Crew Assistant.....	Wynnie Avent
Marketing Design.....	Jon Schroth
Marketing and Promotion.....	Sasha Biagiarelli, Jenna Patton
Publishing.....	Sasha Biagiarelli
Videography.....	Kendra Brisco
Front End Coordinator.....	Maria Bouffard
Tickets & Box Office Sales.....	Sasha Biagiarelli
Usher Directors.....	Jason Feeney

Dancing to End Hunger

This year's performance of Ahavah benefits St. Vincent de Paul Middletown.

St. Vincent de Paul Middletown was opened in 1980 with a mission to meet community needs and offer hope. The community need for nutritious food continues to be addressed by their Soup Kitchen and Amazing Grace Food Pantry. Every day about 200 individuals use the soup kitchen and more than 800 families shop at the food pantry every month. Both of these statistics speak to a significant continuing need.

The Soup Kitchen has taken on the role of a community triage center. New guests coming for breakfast, lunch or a bagged sandwich dinner are approached to see if there is something that they might need. At the Amazing Grace Food Pantry, guests have access to apply for many different assistance programs that could help them or their families.

St. Vincent de Paul runs a Post Office for the homeless, a Community Assistance Program for short term energy, transportation or rent assistance, and even acts as rep/payee for clients who have a hard time managing money. Overall, St. Vincent de Paul looks where there may be a significant need and tries to fill it. Sometimes it is just a referral to the right organization for the right kind of help.

We know that we could all end up needing assistance, and that empathy makes us committed to being welcoming and caring.

Special thanks to Maryellen Shuckerow, Peter Keast and St. Vincent De Paul for meeting needs and offering hope! For more information visit: svdmiddletown.org/



St. Vincent de Paul
Middletown

MEETING NEEDS, OFFERING HOPE.



Special thanks to Mayor Ben Florsheim and the City of Middletown for welcoming Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet to the community! For more information about the Middletown community, visit middletownct.gov.

Special Thanks to our Parish Partners!

Tier 1

Christ Presbyterian Church
Church of the Holy Trinity
Faith Christian Assembly
Living Rock Church
St. Pius X Church

Tier 2

First Congregational Church of Stamford
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church of Ridgefield

Special Thanks To Our Corporate Sponsors!

Middletown Commission on the Arts
The City of Middletown
The Episcopal Church of Connecticut

Special Thanks To Our Community Partners

Barefoot University
Classical Conversations - Madison, CT
Light Homeschool Co-Op

Thank you to Kendra Brisco for recording the performances!
Keepsake Digital Downloads of the show are available for
purchase at ekkleziaballet.org/ahavah.



Special Thanks To Marco
Gaylord and the Staff of
Middletown High School!

Ahavaḥ

The Story of Christmas

Synopsis

The word *Ahavaḥ* means “love” in Hebrew, and this is a story of love.

The world is covered in smog and soot; factory workers toil under harsh conditions. A neighborhood bookseller is dismayed because he hasn't sold a book in months. Customers are only drawn to the products that are thoughtlessly mass-produced in the factory. Overcome by the consumer's demand, the bookseller makes a reluctant deal to change his beloved business and sell the factory product. Hope, a young woman who works at the factory, is horrified that the books are being thrown out and replaced with factory products. She attempts to salvage as many books as she can. When the tyrannical factory owner sees her saving books instead of working she gets fired and thrown out on the street.

While on the street she befriends a homeless man who also shares a sense of loss and rejection. She continues to try to save more books that were thrown out and discovers one book in particular that comes alive and takes her back in time. On this journey she sees a world untainted by greed and production, a world in balance and harmony where all creatures have a knowledge that they are connected to God and to one another. Hope witnesses a story where a young girl like herself named Mary is also an outcast. Mary has the strength and courage to believe that she will give birth to the savior of the world, and this inspires Hope. Mary's son Jesus is born into a violent world with greedy kings and corrupt religious rulers who oppress and control the people they are supposed to serve. Jesus shows people how to speak truth to the rulers, how to demonstrate justice to the powers, how to radically love enemies, and how to remember their oneness with God.

Once returned to the street, Hope discovers that Jesus is still present in her modern-day world, which leads her to the awareness that she is never truly alone. She sees that despite the brokenness of her world, she can now live into the beauty of God's dream.

Ahavaah

The Story of Christmas

Music Selections

- 11h11, by Cirque de Soleil
Instrumental, Future of Forestry, by Eric Owyong
Nero, by Thomas J. Bergersen
Raising, by Dexter Britain
Breaching the Surface, by Dexter Britain
Luxat, by Immediate
Deceit and Betrayal, by Audiomachine
Empathy, by Audiomachine
Atlas, by Thomas Bergersen
The Last Tango, by James Dooley
Idea, by Kai Engel
Hallelujah, by Jocelyn Pook
Rain Underwater, by Dexter Britain
Veni Veni Emmanuel, by Mychael Danna
Everything You Know, by Dexter Britain
Prologue Birth, by Paul Dinletir
In Rosa Vernat Liliun, by Mychael Danna
Silens Nox, by Mychael Danna
Glowing Embers, by Audiomachine
Su-Chou Prison, by Harry Gregson Williams
Majesty, by Dexter Britain
Nightsky, by Tracey Chattaway
Nevertheless, She Persisted, by Audiomachine
An Unfinished Life, by Audiomachine
Jeux d'eau, by Cirque de Soleil
Akram Khan's Giselle, by Vincenzo Lamagna
Time of Death, Alex Weston
Pursuit, by Cirque de Soleil
I Will Find You, by Audiomachine
Radiant, by Audiomachine
Have Patience, by Audiomachine

Ahavaah

The Story of Christmas

The following texts are projected during the performance. Some scriptures are edited with a view to brevity and clarity.

The Book/Transition Scene 1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of earth." God created human beings; He created them godlike, reflecting God's nature. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (Genesis 1:1-2,27-28, 31)

Transition Scene 2/Division of Sin

We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. Some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. (1 Timothy 6:7,9,10)

To Hope/Transition Scene 3

Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven, and does not return there, but water the earth and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, "So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me void. For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Isaiah 54:10; Isaiah 55: 10-11; Jeremiah 29:11)

Rulers & Powers / Transition Scene 4

Your rulers are rebels and companions of thieves; everyone loves a bribe and chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, nor does the widow's plea come before them. The Lord enters into judgment with the elders and princes of His people, "It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the plunder of the poor is in your houses."

(Isaiah 1:23; Isaiah 3:14)

Transition Scene 5

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. After he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:18-21)

Transition Scene 6

Mary said: "My soul is glad because of God my Savior, for He has remembered me, His lowly servant! From now on all people will call me blessed, because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me. His name is holy; from one generation to another He shows mercy to those who honor Him. He has stretched out His mighty arm and scattered the proud with all their plans. He has brought down mighty kings from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has kept the promise He made to His people. He is here to save us forever!" (Luke 1:46-55)

Stars / Transition Scene 7

During the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed. The Magi went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:1-3, 9-12)

Jesus / Transition Scene 8

With my own eyes I've seen your salvation; it's now out in the open for everyone to see: His father and mother were amazed at what was being said about Him. "Indeed, this child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed-and a sword will pierce your own soul-that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was on Him. (Luke 2:30-35, 40)

The Kingdom of God

When Jesus saw the crowds, He began to teach them: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:2-10)

Transition Scene 9

Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of robbers.'" The chief priests heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching. Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is within you."(Mark 11:15, 17-18; Luke 17:20-21)

Transition Scene 10

For He Himself, is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in His flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in Himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which He put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Let us not love in word or tongue, but in actions and in truth. (Ephesians 2:14-18; 1 John 3:16-18)

The
Church
of the

Holy Trinity



381 Main St,
Middletown, CT
06457

860.347.2591

holytrinityct.org



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THEIR 2024
PRODUCTION
OF AHAVAH!**

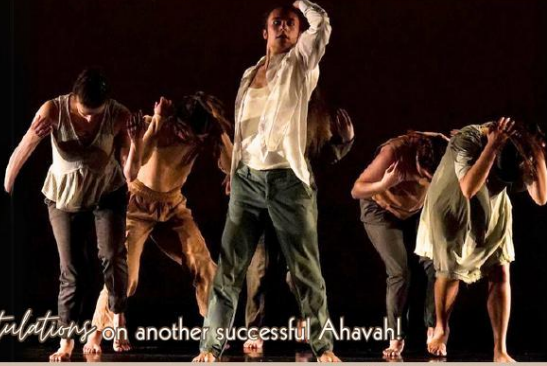
*Congratulations
to Miss Elisa,
and best wishes to all
the cast and crew!*





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*Congratulations to the Ekklesia Ballet
Best wishes with Ahava*



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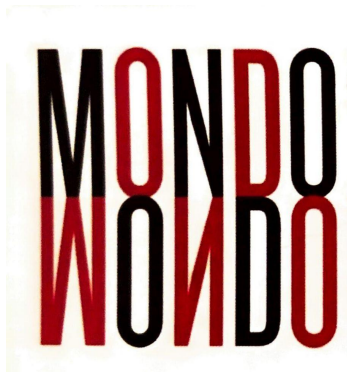


Wishing Ekklesia Contemporary
Ballet & Ekklesia School of Ballet
all the best on this beautiful
journey of *Ahavah*



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joy and blessings
of Christmas
and a healthy
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**MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND HAPPY NEW
YEAR 2025!**



The Board of Directors of
Ekklesia Contemporary
Ballet would like to thank the
performers, staff, volunteers,
and community members for
another year of amazing
growth, learning, shows, and
support. Our wish for you all
is that you find peace, joy,
love, and health this
Christmas and in the coming
year.

May PEACE Prevail on
Earth!





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Sydney,
We are so proud of you! Watching
you dance brings us so much joy.
Keep shining bright. We love you
so much!
Love,
Mom and Dad

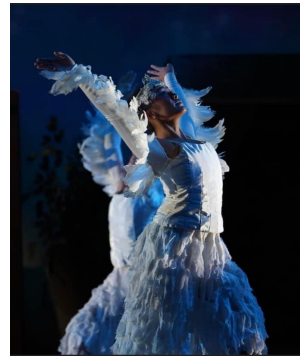


CONGRATULATIONS ASHER!!!!
YOUR SKILLS ARE IMPROVING
SO MUCH EVERY YEAR!
YOU ARE A JOY TO WATCH, YOU
TRULY LIGHT UP THE STAGE!

WE LOVE YOU!
GRAMMA AND GRA-GRA



“And there is grace. I mean the grace resulting from faith...faith in life, in love, in people, in the act of dancing.” – Martha Graham



Ellie, Thank you for sharing the beauty of your grace in all of the years of Ahavah! We love you and we are so proud of you!
From Mommy, Papa and The Brothers

The Kerry House

WE'RE SO PROUD OF YOU,
TIFFANY AND JENNA!

CONGRATS ON YEAR TWO AS PROFESSIONAL DANCERS!



Myalene,

We are so proud of you and the dancer and person you have become.

Watching you dance throughout the years has brought us such joy! You dance with such grace, love and passion. Always dance with Jesus in your heart and he will show you the way.

31 “But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength.

They will soar high on wings like eagles.

They will run and not grow weary.

They will walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40 vs 31

Love,

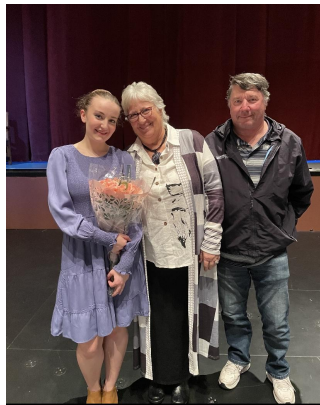
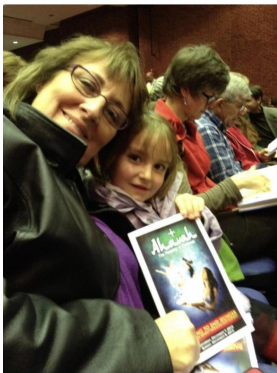
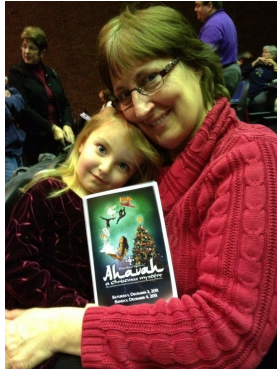
Dad, Mom, Everett and Desmond



To Mya:

Papa and Grandma have watched for years, you dance with such grace, beauty and your love for God in your heart. I will never forget that little girl who first turned to me, the first time experiencing Ahavah. You looked right in my eyes and said, "That's what I want to do with my life, Grandma." You had such adoration in your eyes. We are so proud of you baby girl. You bring such joy to our hearts to watch you. You have become such a beautiful young woman. We love you very much.

Love, Grandma and Papa



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