

# Praise in the Pines set this weekend

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The second Praise in the Pines Christian music festival is set to take place at the Northland Pines High School Fieldhouse this Saturday.

Food trucks will be available to attendees starting at 1 p.m., with doors to the event opening at 2 p.m. and the concert set to begin at 6:30 p.m. The event will run until about 9:30 p.m.

The festival will feature Newsboys and keynote speaker Brad Davison, all set to perform in the fieldhouse, which has been transformed into a concert venue. The renovation of the fieldhouse included advanced lighting and sound equipment, staging and seating for over 2,900 guests.

While Newsboys have recently made headlines after frontman Michael Tait faced allegations of assault and drug abuse, resulting in

him stepping away from the band earlier this year, event organizers say that they're "choosing love" and are still excited to host the band, emphasizing that other band members had no affiliation with Tait's behavior.

"We're trying to do what Jesus would want us to do, and these four men are innocent of all this avalanche of negative publicity," said Praise in the Pines President Bill Lochte. "They're fathers and they're husbands and they have kids to raise and they are being attacked for something they did not do or know of. People are associating them with Tait's bad behavior, and their livelihoods are now at stake. But they're coming here to honor Christ."

In a statement posted to Facebook, event organizers added, "We continue to move forward with our mission to glorify God through music and worship... (Newsboys) are approaching this



Nearly 200 volunteers helped make Praise in the Pines music festival, set Saturday, July 19, a reality. Pictured here, from left to right, are Praise in the Pines board members Ed Brouch, Nancy Szymik, Mike Bishop, Kim Ritchie, Rick Skotzke, Bill Lochte, Beth Logan and Jim Logan. Not pictured are board members Kathy Paul and Fr. Jim Fosdick.

—Staff Photo By JOSEPHINE HINDERMAN

# Praise

FROM PAGE 1

moment with humility, prayer and steadfast focus on their calling. We are excited to welcome them to the festival and celebrate the joy of this gathering together.”

Ultimately, Lochte emphasized that to bring a band as renowned as Newsboys to Eagle River is a unique opportunity, as bands of that caliber typically perform in larger cities like Chicago or Milwaukee, he explained.

“This is unique that we’re bringing a band of this talent to this small community,” he said. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

Preparations for the event also included the work of nearly 200 volunteers, a point of pride for event organizers.

“This amazing volunteer team has been working 12 months solid to show the

people the most amazing day they’ve had all year,” said Lochte. “It will change lives if they show up. If they don’t show up, they’ll never have the experience.”

Another point Lochte wished to draw attention to was that volunteers make no money from an event like this, instead hoping they’re inspiring people to start their faith journeys.

“That’s our goal: to start people on their faith journey, to bring them to this,” explained Lochte. “Nobody is making any money on it. This is not a profit. It’s all psychic income for us — we’re looking for a spiritual ripple effect.”

At their last event in 2024, Praise in the Pines donated parts of its profits to Esther’s House, a ministry of Northwoods Share, Inc. (NWS) based in Eagle River dedicated to helping mothers and their children, but following the ministry shutting its doors over the spring (a decision made due to uncertainty

with government housing programs, struggles of working in a tourist economy and exploring additional ways to battle the homelessness crisis through programs like IC HELP, according to NWS President Kelly Lacko), event organizers said that they’re going to wait before deciding on what organization to support with their funds.

“We decided not to have a kind of spearhead one ministry objective,” Lochte explained. “We decided to see what the results are, sit around here and decide what’s best.”

Tickets and more information about the event are available at [praiseinthepines.org](http://praiseinthepines.org).

Tickets will be available for limited purchase at the door.

Event volunteer Jim Logan concluded, “It’s an experience that no matter what your faith, no matter how deep your faith, it’s an experience that’s

worthwhile. If you’re just there for the music, it’s worthwhile. If you’re there to build your personal faith and help your journey, it’s worthwhile. It’s good music, it’s a good time, it’s family entertainment.”

The following is a timeline of the event:

**1 p.m.** - Food trucks will be available to attendees.

**2 p.m.** - Doors open to the ministry fair, running until 6:30 p.m.

**3 p.m.** - The free Worship Experience in the Auditorium begins.

**5 p.m.** - Premium ticket holders have a band meet and greet.

**5:45 p.m.** - Early entry for floor and bleacher seats.

**6 p.m.** - Field house opens to all.

**6:30 p.m.** - Concert begins.

Those who are interested in attending the event but cannot afford tickets, contact [rejoice@praiseinthepines.org](mailto:rejoice@praiseinthepines.org) for more information.