

A Note from Rev Steve Peters

(Pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church, Fort Dodge, IA)

Greetings! I've been asked to tell you about our production of Kevin M Reese's *Beneath the Upper Room*— from my perspective as a local pastor. I gladly do this! Our church is relatively new to Chancel Drama. We do the yearly Christmas pageant with our kids and usually do a presentation of some sort for Easter with our Youth Group— but never a full-blown production. Our experience with Kevin's show was surprisingly stress-free.

To begin with, the cast is mostly women. I'm sure we're like most churches in that more women than men are willing to get up onstage. The women in our congregation were thrilled that there was an Easter play out there that had good, fun roles for them (most Easter plays have just Jesus and the Disciples). Many of the women had very moving monologues. Also, the script had plenty of roles for all levels of experience— some with lots of lines, some with very few (you can even add "extras" who help in the kitchen but have no lines). And with a running time of only about 30 minutes, the rehearsal time required was relatively easy. A couple days a week for six weeks was all it took— was all it needed. And there was VERY little cost involved as most props, costumes and scenery items were easily acquired.

Kevin has included in his Director's Script all sorts of notes, lists, and suggestions to make it as easy on your director as possible. Props lists, costuming tips, scenery suggestions— it's all there. He's even included a rather exhaustive collection of footnotes in the script that explain some of his choices as he was writing the script. He also includes lots of interesting trivia and many challenging perspectives that may make you think twice about how you've looked at Christ's Passion in the past.

I hope you consider presenting *Beneath the Upper Room* in your church. Your congregation will be very surprised to see the story of Our Lord's Passion told from the perspective of the women who served Him. The whole experience was a blessing for our church and I'm sure it will be a blessing for yours as well.

A Note from Playwright Kevin M Reese

I wanted the audience to have to think a little while watching because I imagine, as was my case, it has been a long, long time since they've had to do that in regard to this story. And given the fact that there are usually more women than men willing to take part in a play, I endeavored to write a story that used lots of women.

During Jesus' time, it was usually women who served. From what we glean from the Bible, there were a number of people who constantly traveled with Jesus, many of whom were women. Undoubtedly, those women took up the many caring tasks of the group. We know at least some of the names of the women who were there for the crucifixion. By a sort of "reverse engineering," I think I'm making a pretty safe assumption that the characters in this play could very well have been around Jesus during the Last Supper.

There are relatively few facts available from the Bible about the Jesus' Last Supper. We know they used somebody's spare room. We know the Disciples were with him. We know Jesus celebrated Passover, washed feet, blessed the wine and the bread, confronted Judas and Peter, then left for the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane. Although the exact order of events differ from book to book and scholar to scholar— those are things we can point to in the scriptures. There are other things of which we can only infer, such as that they followed the elements of a traditional Passover Seder ceremony and that their meal was prepared and served by somebody other than the Disciples themselves.

THAT is the impetus for this play. *Shalom!*

COMPLETE 60-MINUTE MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

- ▶ **Play** - Runs 30 minutes
- ▶ **Communion Service** - Suggested text included from Communion Service that took place during original production.
- ▶ **Benediction** - Suggested Pastor's "Sending Forth" included from original production.

REV: 012010

Beneath the Upper Room

by Kevin M Reese

A NEW Short Play about
Jesus' Last Supper—
From the Viewpoint of the
Women Who Served Him

NOT your typical Last Supper Play!

**Presented in Churches
All Over the Country--
Now Available for Production
in Your Church!**

A Complete
Maundy Thursday Service!



www.beneaththeupperroom.com

Perfect for Women's Groups

A Last Supper Play that uses more women than men? The unique thing about this show is that it is about the women— not about the men, the disciples. Yes, it's about Jesus and his Last Supper with His Disciples— but this new and unique version of the story is told from the viewpoint of the women who served the meal, swept the floors and otherwise tended to The Master. We learn of their viewpoints, their perspectives, their hopes and dreams for their families, their friends and their Savior. Your audience (not to mention your cast!) will come away from this experience with renewed Faith and perspective because they will have discovered new meaning in the age-old story they've heard over and over their whole lives.

Story of the Play

Ezekiel, a servant to the owner of the Upper Room, invites us to the place where Jesus and his Disciples are to celebrate their first Passover Meal together (which will turn out to be his Last Supper). There, in the kitchen, we see the women of Jesus' group busily preparing the traditional Passover meal. Course by course, they prepare the meal. Course by course they serve the meal to the Disciples and return to the kitchen to report what they saw happening in the Upper Room— and how it affects them. The only Disciples we see are Judas and Peter as they pass through the kitchen on their way to— and from— the Upper Room. Of course, the women sense that something is happening. The play ends after Jesus and his Disciples have finished their meal, headed off to the Mount of Olives, and the women finish cleaning up.

Comments

THANK YOU for the wonderful script! Our congregation & community was blessed by the experience! Peter's monologue at the end of the script is such a powerful portrayal of how the disciples must have felt about not only their Lord, but their friend! The entire script is a reminder to me that Jesus is our friend – he wants to laugh with us, to hug us, to share experiences with us. He is not intangible and removed from us. I can't think of a better lesson to carry us into the celebration of His resurrection! Happy Easter,

**Kristin Giffin, Worship Director
Moorpark Presbyterian Church (CA)**

I loved it! I sat chuckling in different spots. I've never thought of the last supper in respect of the women's point of view and what it might have been like. Going to church at least two or three times a week since early childhood, I've heard the story many times and have seen pictures of what artists thought it might have looked like. I am amazed by the different feelings and thoughts that I now have concerning this story. Thank you for giving me that new perspective.

**Doris Abbas, 4th Grade Teacher
Webster City, IA**

Great job! It was so well received by our congregation. My cast gave me an ultimatum that I now have to do something bigger next year! In fact, they all said they would do this again. Some of the cast had never been in a play before, let alone ever have been asked. I pushed a lot of comfort zones on people who would have never thought they could do something like this. We all got a little closer, got to know each other better, and made a tremendous impact on our audience.

**Lynnette Welsch, Director
Forest Hills United Methodist Church (MN)**



Show Particulars

CAST: 16 (10 Women / 3 Men / 3 Children) Easily adaptable to your cast requirements. Pastor Optional.
TECHNICAL: Simple sets, props and costumes. Easily performed in your sanctuary!

FEES – Two Options:

1> Churches– Flat \$55.00 – Includes everything: Performance Packet CD rental and performance royalty (for up to 3 performances). If you present more than 3 performances, you pay only \$35.00 per additional performance after your show closes.

2> Other Organizations – \$75.00 + Includes Performance Packet CD rental, royalty for one performance and a refundable \$25 deposit (when the rented CD is returned promptly). After your show closes, you just send an additional royalty payment of **\$35 per additional performance.**

WHAT YOU GET:

Performance Packet on CD (the CD is rented and must be returned following your production)

- ✓ **Annotated Director's Script:** Full of helpful notes, lists, stage directions, suggestions and explanations— all the info you need to successfully produce the show in your church or theatre.
- ✓ **Actor's Scripts** - Official acting edition with license to photocopy for your production.
- ✓ **Sample Program** – From original production, includes Playwright's Note
- ✓ **Preshow PowerPoint** – Editable slide show template, personalize it for your needs.
- ✓ **Sample Audition Form**
- ✓ **Graphics** – logos, fonts, promotional “teaser” graphics, and original production stills.
- ✓ **Recipes** – authentic traditional Passover recipes for use in the show or for your cast party.
- ✓ **Video** – complete video of original production (with license to use the copyrighted blocking).
- ✓ **Direct access to playwright Kevin M Reese.**

www.beneaththeupperroom.com