

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Dear Reader...

This is the place and moment I attempt to offer my thoughts and ideas regarding the play you are about to see. To that end... I will answer the following question.

*Why The Christians?*

First... Well, we were slated to produce this play last Spring. Due to the shutdown, we were unable to mount the production. The department felt that it was worth keeping in the upcoming season.

Second... I am very fortunate to have been blessed with a career that provides so much personal and professional fulfillment. A career that allows me to work in the theatre (the only professional pursuit I am truly suited for) within the academic setting of a Liberal Arts University. My greatest joy is when those two seemingly very different avenues converge and a play comes along that excites both the intellectual/theological and the artistic/emotional.

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## COMING SOON...

### **Dance Team Winter Showcase**

Presented by PLU Dance Team  
Streaming December 5 at 7:30pm

### **Dust by Danielle Mohlman**

Presented by PLU Alpha Psi Omega  
Directed by Anamaria Guerzon  
Streaming March 11, 12, and 13 at 7:30pm

**Reserve your streaming spot at**  
**[www.plu.edu/theatre-dance/season](http://www.plu.edu/theatre-dance/season)**

# The Christians

By Lucas Hnath

Directed by Jeff Clapp

November 12-14 at 7:30pm, November 15 at 2:00pm  
Streaming online



PACIFIC  
LUTHERAN  
UNIVERSITY



School of Arts +  
Communication

# THE CHRISTIANS

By Lucas Hnath

**DIRECTOR & PROPERTIES**.....Jeff Clapp  
**SCENIC & LIGHTING DESIGNER**.....Amanda Sweger  
**COSTUME DESIGNER**.....Kathleen Anderson\*  
**SOUND DESIGNER**.....Brittany Isaacson  
**MEDIA LIAISON**.....Shelby Hickman  
**STAGE MANAGER**.....Monique Otter-Johnson\*

## PRODUCTION CREW

**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**.....Henry Loughman\*  
**COSTUME SHOP MANAGER**.....Kathleen Anderson\*  
**ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER**.....Natalee Aalgaard\*  
**SCENIC CONSTRUCTION**.....Mathæus Andersen,  
Isaac Madsen-Bibeau, Allison Sheflo, Ben Rampley  
**COSTUME CONSTRUCTION**.....Emelie Pennington-Davis,  
Destiny Colville, Natalee Aalgaard, Abigail Wetzel, Anna Hartman  
**SOUND TECH**.....Bry Stoddard  
**RUNNING CREW**.....Hanne Ferguson, Pip Walker

## SPECIAL THANKS

Dean Cameron Bennett and the School of Arts and  
Communication  
Sarah Daggett  
Beth Miller  
Reesa Nelson  
Travis Pagel  
St. Matthew Episcopal Church  
John Struzenberg

## CAST

Pastor.....Mathæus Andersen\*  
Wife.....Kylie Steves\*  
Associate.....Kody Smith  
Elder.....Kaden Bolton  
Congregant.....Peyton Noreen

## TIME/PLACE

The 21st Century  
America

*There is no intermission*

*\*Denotes membership in Alpha Psi Omega (ΑΨΩ), National Theatre Honor Society*

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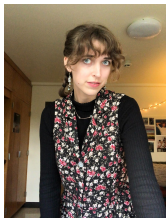
## CAST BIOGRAPHIES



**Mathæus Andersen** (*Pastor*) is a senior theatre major, dance minor from Copenhagen, Denmark whose recent credits include Jamie in *Lute Follies*, Duke Solinus in *Comedy of Errors* & Young Man in *Blood Wedding*. He would like to thank Caylin, Kody, Henry, and all of his friends and family for their support, and director Jeff Clapp for giving him this opportunity.



**Kaden Bolton** (*Elder*) is a first year political science major from Enumclaw, WA whose recent credits include ensemble in *Broadway at the Movies* (PLU), Jedidiah Schultz in *The Laramie Project* (Pocket Theatre), and Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* (Enumclaw High School). He would like to thank Darrell Miller, his family and friends, his fish, and director Jeff Clapp for the opportunity.



**Peyton Noreen** (*Congregant*) is a sophomore Theatre major from Troutdale, OR whose recent credits include Director for *Vpstart Crow One Acts* (PLU), Lenny in *Crimes of the Heart* (Sandy High School), and Lucille Early in *No, No Nanette* (Sandy High School). They would like to thank Casey, Marilyn, their other wonderful friends, their sister Annika, and director Jeff Clapp for this opportunity.



**Kody Smith** (*Associate*) is a first year musical theatre major from Everett, Washington. Some of his recent roles include Benny in *In the Heights* (Village Theatre Kidstage), Reverend Shaw in *Footloose*, and Peter Pan in *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Everett High School). He is excited and grateful to be a part of his first PLU production!

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES



**Kylie Steves** (*Wife*) is a senior BFA theatre major whose recent credits include the Chorus in *Medea* (PLU), and Chorus in *Oklahoma!* (Auburn Ave Theatre). She would like to thank her family for their unending support, and director Jeff Clapp for this opportunity.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES *(continued from page 8)*

Several years ago, the university was creating a comprehensive plan to take us to 2020. This entailed re-crafting mission statements and the like. There were many suggestions. One idea that has always stuck with me was "to encourage the student to ask the 'Big enough Questions'". That, in a nutshell, is what this play is about. The exploration of a foundational tenet of Christianity: does Hell exist? And, what does the answer mean, on a very personal level, to those who are practitioners of the faith. What does one do when confronted with a question they had always thought they had an answer for? How does – what always seemed to be solid ground – become unstable when trying to understand God's love?

The other reason I liked the "Big Enough Questions" idea, was the implicit fact that big questions rarely lead you to any real answers...just bigger questions. The focus then becomes the journey. As a person of faith, a teacher, and a theatre artist...it's the journey I am interested in.

Side note: I do not wish to bore you with all the sordid Covid details, but when it all was said and done, *The Christians* worked out wonderfully as a response to all the limitations that the pandemic has placed on us as theatre artists. The structure and the cast size of the play allowed for a smoother transition to the world of Zoom, challenged the actors to acclimatize to a new performance medium, while at the same time holding on to a more traditional theatrical rehearsal and performance process. I have to hand it to the actors, they have done some wonderful work together without ever being in presence with one another. It became fascinating to me to watch the evolution of our work. What started out as an uncomfortable exercise in frustration (we are all painfully aware of the new 2020 catch-all word "Connectivity"). On many occasions, audio was the only thing working, and from that frustrating

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## PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES

**Natalee Aalgard** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is a junior BFA fine arts major from Wenatchee whose recent credits include Stage Manager for *A Comedy of Errors* (PLU). She would like to thank Monique, Mom, and Dad.

**Kathleen Anderson** (*Costume Design*) has an MFA in Costume and Set Design from Northwestern University. Her favorite designs for PLU Theatre include costume and set designs for *Twelfth Night* and *The Spitfire Grill*, costume design for *Cabaret*, *A Dream Play*, and *The Fantasticks*, and puppet and costume design for *The Floating World*. She has also designed extensively for Tacoma Opera and Harlequin Productions in Olympia.

**Jeff Clapp** (*Director/Properties*) is an Associate Professor of Theatre and Dance at Pacific Lutheran University whose recent directing credits include *Songs I'll Never Sing: A Musical Revue*, *Master Harold...and the boys*, *Medea*, *Godspell*, and *Amadeus*. Jeff has also served as Technical Director and Stage Director for Tacoma Opera. Some of the production work Jeff is most proud of while at Tacoma Opera include *Madame Butterfly*, *Tosca*, *Fallstaff*, *Barber of Seville*, and *An Evening with Kurt Weill*. Jeff has served as a faculty member at PLU since 1995. While not working in theatre, Jeff enjoys exploring and fly fishing northwest rivers with his wife and son.

**Shelby Hickman** (*Media Liaison*) is a senior acting/directing BFA major and dance minor from Washington. She most recently performed in *Broadway at The Movies* as an ensemble member. She has enjoyed the opportunity to bring streaming and theatre together for this show as she has been creating content on Twitch for over two years now. She would like to thank Jeff for this opportunity, the production team, Sean, and her family. Enjoy the show!

## PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES

**Henry Loughman** (*Technical Director*) received his BA in theatre from San Diego State University. Prior to his arrival at PLU in 2006, he worked as Production Coordinator and Technical Director at Christian Community Theatre in San Diego and as Technical Director at the Palo Alto Children's Theatre.

**Monique Otter-Johnson** (*Stage Manager*) is a senior BFA Technical/Design Theatre major from Olympia, WA whose recent credits include assistant stage managing *Urinetown* and *Vpstart Crow's Precious Little* (PLU). She would like to thank Natalee Aalgaard, Jeff Clapp, and the whole cast and crew for making stage managing virtual theatre easier.

**Amanda Sweger** (*Scenic and Lighting Design*) is a lighting and scenic designer who has freelanced in Seattle, Chicago, Nashville, and Philadelphia. She received an MFA from Northwestern University in 2011 and is now a tenured professor at Pacific Lutheran University. She is proud to have designed with companies such as The Second City, TimeLine Theatre, the Seattle Theatre Group, and Taproot Theatre Company.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES *(continued from page 5)*

limitation grew an honesty in the acting that doesn't always happen. A director can tell actors to listen to each other until they are blue in the face, but when that's all the actor has, unconsciously the intensity of their work becomes extremely focused.

Finally, what really drew me to this piece is the final line of the play. In many ways (at least to me), the last line makes more sense to me and my life than any other answer available. And if you are looking for an explanation for the year 2020...pay heed to that last line.

**Enjoy, Jeff A. Clapp, Director**